



Autumn books:
A critical guide
Weekend section

Urban decay comes
your way
Page 17

THE INDEPENDENT

3,085 SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 1996 WEATHER Cloudy start, becoming gradually brighter 50p (inc. VAT)

Country police forces lose out to city patrols

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Cuts of up to 13 per cent in the budgets of rural police forces are to be put to ministers under proposals which would see a switch of resources to the big cities. Large cuts in the numbers of officers in country areas would follow as some forces, such as the Metropolitan Police, would get increases of more than 6 per cent - worth £100m.

Chief constables in the forces under threat are deeply concerned at the prospect of losing money on next year's budgets. A row over police funding, which included the threat of a drop in the number of officers, would be extremely damaging to the Government in the run up to the general election.

The Home Office's proposed changes in the current funding formula, which calculates how much each of the 43 forces in England and Wales receives, follows a study by a Home Office working party. The findings are due to be presented to ministers in two weeks' time.

The Independent understands that under the proposed changes for next April forces such as Dyfed Powys could lose up to 13.4 per cent of its £48m budget - the equivalent of about 250 officers. The Metropolitan Police would get an extra 6.6 per cent on top of its £1,551m allocation.

Other big losers would include Devon and Cornwall, which could get £12m or 8.1 per cent chopped off its budget. The City of London is the only force in a metropolitan area to be among the top 10 losers.

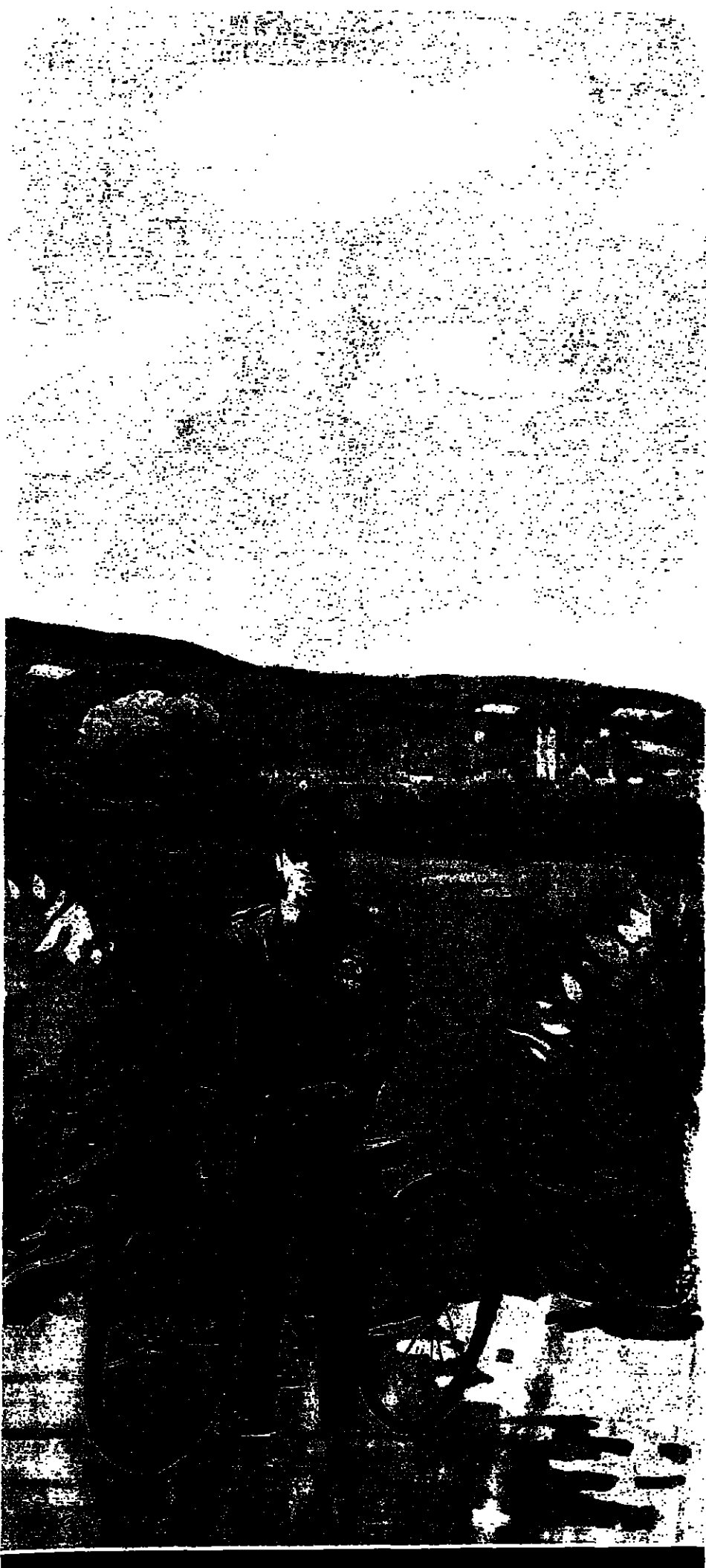
A chief constable, who did not want to be named, said: "At the moment the formula seems skewed in favour of metropolitan forces at the expense of rural ones. Many are already underfunded and struggling... There is also a suspicion that the bigger city forces have more political clout and influence."

Ray White, Chief Constable of Dyfed Powys, possibly the hardest hit force, said a large reduction to his budget would be disastrous. "The funding provided for the force is already very limited and we are carefully considering all the possibilities which might arise as a result of changes to the funding formula," he said.

A new formula, which gives money for factors such as crime rates, population and unemployment levels, first came into use in 1995/6 and gave chief constables control of their budgets for the first time. However, many police chiefs believe it is flawed. Several of the options are extremely unlikely to be accepted, so The Independent has calculated the possible winners and losers based on the six factors most likely to be accepted.

These include a greater emphasis on the time forces actually spend at the scene of specific types of incident. For example, more money would be available for specialist squads, such as fraud and murder, rather than burglaries and car theft. Another factor is the cost of living in different parts of the country.

A Home Office spokesman said the review was still going on and a final decision had not been made.



TOP Five LOSERS		TOP Five WINNERS	
Devon and Cornwall 8.1%		West Midlands 4.6%	
North Yorkshire 7.3%		Greater Manchester 2.5 %	

Jewish group uncovers proof of conspiracy
by 'Odessa File' Nazis in secret papers

Fourth Reich plot revealed

DANIEL JEFFREYS
New York

Secret US documents uncovered by a Jewish human rights group have proved the existence of a Nazi support group that sought to smuggle people and gold out of Germany in 1945, and worked for the establishment of a Fourth Reich.

The group is vividly portrayed in Frederick Forsyth's novel *The Odessa File*. Mr Forsyth confirmed yesterday that his novel was based on reports of a meeting which took place in France in August 1944. This meeting is detailed in US documents seen by The Independent which were collected by a top-secret intelligence operation called Project Safehaven at the end of the war.

"The Odessa existed and they removed billions of dollars in looted Jewish assets from Germany," says Elan Steinberg, executive director at the World Jewish Congress (WJC). "Their plan was to re-establish the Nazi Party from safe havens outside Germany and many of the assets they smuggled out must still exist." The WJC is seeking to recover Jewish assets which were stolen by the Nazis.

The Odessa document is an American intelligence report stamped "Secret" and written in November 1944. It is based on the work of a French intelligence agent deployed by the

Deuxieme Bureau which penetrated Nazi organisations in Paris during the German occupation. The agent observed an August 1944 meeting of German industrialists held in Strasbourg. It was presided over by S.S. Obergruppenfuhrer Dr Heshe company before the war.

"Their plan was to smuggle gold, patents and art out of Germany along with top industrialists," says Steinberg. "Meanwhile, the Nazi Party would re-establish itself in Germany as an underground movement."

The document was discovered in July when Steinberg gained access to recently declassified papers from the National Archive in Washington. Steinberg has authenticated the report and linked it to others which show that the German Reichsbank, precursor to the Bundesbank, was involved in the Odessa plot.

According to a secret US State Department telegram dated 4 December, 1945, the Reichsbank maintained a depot of gold at the Swiss National Bank throughout the war. By 1945 it had accumulated bullion worth \$123m which was earmarked for Odessa operations.

The Strasbourg meeting laid out a comprehensive plan for resurrecting the Reich. Executives from Volkswagen, Krupp Steel, Brown-Boveri, Messerschmidt, Zeiss and Leica were ordered to establish operations overseas and finance the Nazi Party from abroad. The intelligence report quotes SS Obergruppenfuhrer Schied as he spelt out the post-war strategy:

"From now on, German industry must realise that the war cannot be won and that it must make steps in preparation for a post-war commercial campaign," he said. "(In future) existing financial reserves in foreign countries must be placed at the disposal of the Party so that a strong German Empire can be created after the defeat."

The Odessa document and many and France with a view to building a Fourth Reich.

Yet he always insisted large elements of his book were true, based on information gleaned from "friends in low places." The declassified American intelligence report obtained by The Independent yesterday talks of a meeting at the Hotel Rotes Haus. This was the name given to the hotel after the German invasion of Strasbourg.

"I believe there were a number of meetings there at which the SS and industrialists carved up much of the proceeds of the Third Reich," said Forsyth. "From that point on, the fanatics were looking for funds to create the Fourth Reich. The proceeds went to Switzerland

others in the possession of the WJC may have adverse implications for the modern descendants of leading German corporations. "We now have sufficient evidence for an indictment," said Elan Steinberg yesterday.

"We will be conducting further investigations which will include all the companies named in the Odessa documents and we will seek reparations where appropriate."

The Odessa document came to light after the WJC failed to persuade Switzerland to voluntarily open secret Nazi bank accounts in May this year. "The documents are evidence of the biggest robbery in the history of mankind," says Steinberg, who has now forced the Swiss government to begin a full inquiry.

The Independent reported yesterday that Adolf Hitler had been reported to have held numbered accounts at Union Bank of Switzerland. UBS yesterday issued a statement denying that it was still handling funds deposited by Nazis during the war.

Robert Vogler, the bank's chief spokesman in Zurich, could not say whether such an account had ever existed but he said that all funds belonging to Germans were frozen after the war, their owners vetted, and those traced to known Nazis handed over to the Allies.

The fiction that became fact

STEVE BOGGAN

In 1972 it all seemed so far-fetched - but it made a great film. A former concentration camp commandant, the journalist who investigated him, a meeting to decide on the movement of plundered Nazi gold and a network of SS officers with access to Swiss bank accounts.

It was the plot of *The Odessa File* and it made Frederick Forsyth a small fortune. At the time, however, few would believe him when he said the book's villain, Eduard Roschmann, the Butcher of Riga, was a real character.

Fewer still would believe the book's claim that a meeting of



Forsyth: 'Story was true'

high-ranking SS officers and industrialists took place at the Maison Rouge hotel in Strasbourg in 1944 to discuss ways of moving Nazi gold out of Ger-

many and France with a view to building a Fourth Reich.

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The declassified American intelligence report obtained by The Independent yesterday talks of a meeting at the Hotel Rotes Haus. This was the name given to the hotel after the German invasion of Strasbourg.

"I believe there were a number of meetings there at which the SS and industrialists carved up much of the proceeds of the Third Reich," said Forsyth. "From that point on, the fanatics were looking for funds to create the Fourth Reich. The proceeds went to Switzerland

and some were undoubtedly drawn out, but because of the convoluted way they set up the accounts, I believe much of it must still be there.

"They would grab someone like their chauffeur and their cook and get them to sign a document. Years later, when they were out of the army, the chauffeur and cook would be contacted again and told to sign another piece of paper. They wouldn't know it but they were signatories to a Swiss bank account."

"It has always seemed scandalous to me that the Swiss banks are sitting on huge sums of money put there by the Nazis but also deposited by Jews who were later murdered."

QUICKLY

Saddam's shadow
Aid workers are leaving Kurdistan as the shadow of the President Saddam Hussein lengthens over Northern Iraq, amid a sense of impending doom. Western security guarantees have been shown this week to be more psychological than real. Pages 12 and 13

Unit trust claims

Morgan Grenfell may face compensation claims amounting to hundreds of millions of pounds over investors' losses suffered through its failure to halt alleged fraudulent trades in some of its unit trusts. Page 20

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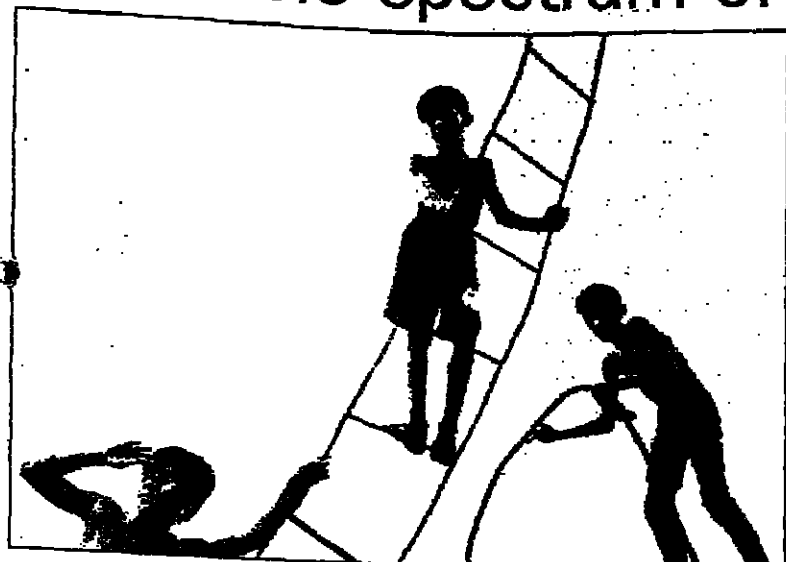
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The spectrum of life captured in the blink of a camera's shutter



The 8th Perpignan International Festival of Photojournalism runs until 15 September and exhibits include (right) Jean Larivière's shot of a monk and cat in a Burmese monastery; street children in Brazil (above) by award-winning photographer, Francesco Zizola; and an intimate moment in the lives of six-year-old Siamese twins (below) captured by Steve Wewerka



Ministers to ban teenagers from drinking in public

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Under-18s will be banned from drinking in public and the police are to be given new powers to confiscate alcohol found on them, the Government proposed today.

Planned laws would also allow the police to seize alcohol from adults in a public place if they believed the drink was going to be given to an under-aged person. Picnicking families enjoying a bottle of wine are unlikely to be affected.

Under the Home Office plans, teenagers found with booze on them would have to provide their name and address and failure to do so could result in a £500 fine.

The move follows growing concern about youngsters who meet in public spaces such as town centres and village greens, get drunk, cause a nuisance by harassing passers-by and vandalise buildings. The new measures are contained in a Home Office consultation paper *Under-Aged Drinking in Public*, which is published today.

At present it is an offence for a person under 18 to buy alcohol, or to consume it on licensed premises, such as a public house. It is also against the law to sell alcohol to someone under 18. But it is not an offence

for someone under 18 to drink in public or private, and adults can legally buy alcohol for children to consume.

The issue of under-aged drinking was highlighted earlier this week in the row over new high-alcohol designer drinks, which are aimed at young consumers. The makers of the new "alco-pop" drink Thickhead, a tangerine-flavoured alcoholic jelly, have agreed to redesign the label on the bottle and make it

more obvious that the man featured is over 18.

There has been growing pressure to take action against drunkenness in public and drinking in public is banned in 33 areas in country, including several cities such as Coventry. The latest alcohol curfew was introduced in Glasgow last month.

The Home Office proposals would allow the police to seize and destroy alcohol taken from

teenagers only if they believed the person had been drinking or was about to consume the alcohol. The Government had considered making drinking in public by under-aged people a criminal offence, but decided that that would be too draconian a move and would clog up the courts.

The Government is also seeking views on whether the police should be allowed to carry out more "test purchase"

sting operations, in which an under aged person is sent into an off licence or bar to see whether the law is being upheld.

Timothy Kirkhope, a Home Office minister, said: "Action is needed to stop drunken young people vandalising property and causing mischief in public places."

"I know that some people find it very distressing and disturbing to see young people drunk in public, especially when they cause trouble. Under the present law most communities are powerless to prevent this kind of behaviour. Action can only be taken if a law is broken. By this stage, when windows are broken or someone is hurt, it is too late."

"If the police can take alcohol from young people in public we hope that it will stop trouble before it starts."

The Police Federation, which represents the vast bulk of officers in England and Wales, yesterday welcomed the proposals, but said that they were concerned about possible practical difficulties in identifying under-aged drinkers.

The Government will consult the licensed trade, the police, magistrates and other interested parties up to 14 October. The Home Office may use a Private Member's Bill to bring in new laws.



Concern is growing over drunken young people causing a nuisance to passers-by

Aids victim wants 'Shirley Valentine' lover jailed

LOUISE JURY

A divorcee who contracted HIV from a man she met after starting a new life in Cyprus has begun an extraordinary fight to have him jailed.

Janette Pink, 44, wants to see an HIV-positive Cypriot fisherman, Pavlos Georgiou, behind bars for recklessly infecting her, within the 20 months she has been given to live.

But as Essex police discussed what legal routes may be open to her with the Crown Prosecution Service yesterday, Aids experts and lawyers warned that legal action would be fraught with difficulty.

Nick Partridge, chief executive of the Terrence Higgins Trust which helps people with Aids, said: "This is a tragic case but using the law creates more problems than solutions."

Mrs Pink moved to Cyprus after her 20-year marriage to a City accountant crumbled. Her move echoed the play and film.

Shirley Valentine, in which a frustrated housewife escapes her dull life in Britain to find romance on a Greek island.

She became friendly with Mr Georgiou, 39, who told her his wife was dying of leukaemia. In truth, she had Aids and Mr Georgiou was HIV-positive.

Unaware, Mrs Pink fell in love with him and became infected. She discovered last summer when she had an Aids test.

When he began to see other women, she left Cyprus and returned to Britain where she is now "weak but comfortable" in a private room at Basildon Hospital in Essex.

Mrs Pink, who has two grown-up children, told the *Daily Mail* yesterday: "I have been incredibly naive but I did not deserve this... I really believed his wife had leukaemia. What he has done is murder. The law in this country needs to be looked at to protect others. This man lied and cheated his way into my life."

Her MP, Sir Teddy Taylor, has written to Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, about the case and her family have asked for the help of Essex police.

A police spokeswoman said: "We're working with the CPS to establish whether we have any jurisdiction to make any criminal prosecution."

The case would be unprecedented in Britain but if Mr Georgiou was brought to trial here, he could face charges of grievous bodily harm or manslaughter, when Mrs Pink dies. A case on the holiday island would be more probable - though still very unlikely.

Cyprus police are understood to be investigating.

However, the Terrence Higgins Trust expressed caution at the idea of a criminal prosecution. The trust fears that legislation dealing with this kind of case would discourage people from seeking an HIV test and could increase the spread of the virus.

Court ordeal for rape victim

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES

Pressure for a review of court procedures in sexual cases intensified yesterday after a gang-rape victim made legal history by spending 31 hours in an Old Bailey witness box.

The victim, a 20-year-old Japanese student, was questioned by barristers for each of six defendants, aged from 15 to 23, who had kept her a sexual prisoner for nearly two days.

Disclosure of the torment of the lengthy court proceedings, spanning 12 days in all, came as Judge Graham Boal handed down a total of 15 sentences ranging from 30 months to 10 years, for rape, aiding and abetting rape, and indecent assault.

It is the responsibility of the judge to control oppressive questioning but Judge Boal told the attackers, who argued the woman had consented: "For over 30 hours this girl had to relive the ordeal in a public court and in front of total strangers. Outrageous suggestions were put to her on your instructions. You, not your counsel, added insult to injury and heaped further humiliation on her."

Legal sources later challenged claims that the woman had been repeatedly asked the same questions. They said the

trial had been prolonged due to a number of factors, including the need for an interpreter.

The principal cross-examination is claimed to have taken about three days, but most of the others were much shorter. Three to four days were spent giving evidence in chief for the prosecution.

The Victim Support charity called on the Bar Council to examine the use of multiple defence counsel and repetitive questioning.

A fortnight ago, victims and women's groups called for a change in the law after a rapist defending himself was allowed to cross-examine his victim for six days.

The gang, which included three brothers, was led by Gerard Molloy, 16, who had promised the woman there would be no sexual contact after insisting that she stay at his Brighton home rather than cross London to her own flat after watching a film. Once there he raped her twice and, the judge said, "shared her around your friends as though she were an inanimate plaything". Molloy took her to another house where he raped her again, followed by three others. The following morning she was indecently assaulted by three of the gang.



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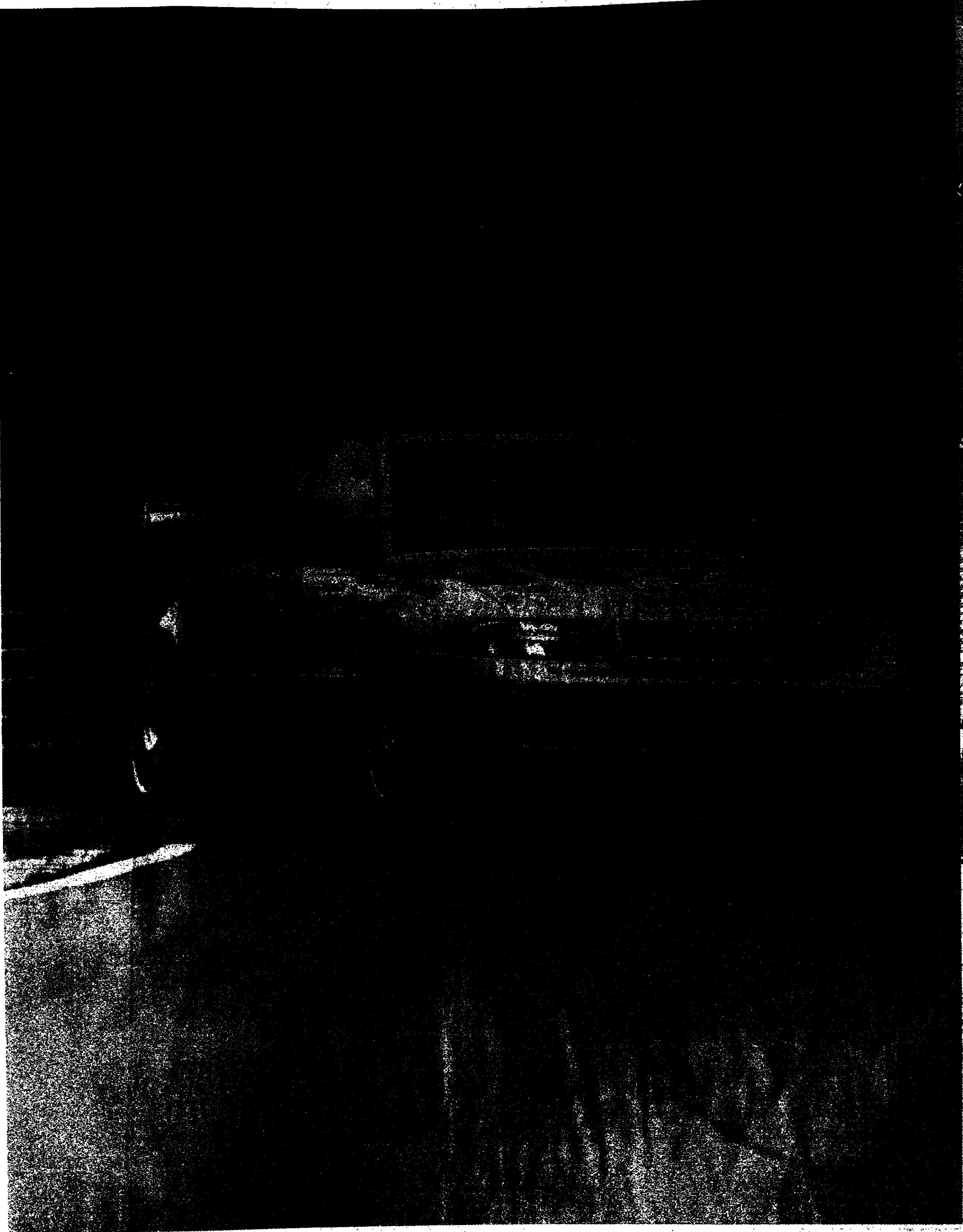
From a day, the World as you know it will be easier to read than ever before. Personal Computer World has been brilliantly redesigned to give you a brighter, cleaner layout between the covers. Even the CD-ROM has been revamped making it fully interactive.

On top of this, there's an expanded product group section with a new rating system, and a new feature: the Business World product section and a new feature: the World of the World section. As a computer user, there are even better ways to get the most out of your computer.

Refined. Revised. Read on.



Personal Computer World



APOLOGY.

Audi and their winning driver*, Frank Biela, wish to apologise to all the other drivers for having to make them go through the motions in the last few races of the RAC Auto Trader British Touring Car Championships. Frank shall endeavour to make sure this doesn't happen again next year.

* RAC AUTO TRADER BTCC DRIVERS CHAMPIONSHIP 1998. SUBJECT TO OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION.

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ANTHONY DEYING
Politics Editor

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CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

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Labour clarifies the mud of devolution

ANTHONY BEVINS
Political Editor

Labour was plunged into further acute embarrassment over devolution yesterday when George Robertson, the party's spokesman on Scotland, was forced to "clarify" the muddy confusion of its policy - and drop the party's latest referendum plan.

Having last weekend decided to stage a third referendum, on activation of the Scottish parliament's tax-raising powers, Mr Robertson staged a Glasgow press conference to say the additional vote was "not necessary and will not be pursued by the Labour Party".

The high-speed change, ridiculed by one Labour source as "not so much a U-turn as an S-bend", is the third change since June when the Labour leadership dropped its bombshell plan to ask the Scottish voters whether they wanted a Scottish parliament, and whether it should have the power to vary taxes by up to three pence in the pound.

Last weekend, Labour's Scottish executive decided on the further referendum on the use of that tax power - so unceremoniously jettisoned by Mr Robertson yesterday. He said that it clearly had no support, was not necessary and would not be pursued, although that was not the line he had steadfastly pursued in media interviews at the start of the week.

Yesterday, however, Mr Robertson and his party's Scottish general secretary, Jack McConnell, denied that Labour was in disarray over devolution, or that the decision amounted

to a change in policy. It was described as a change of tactics.

The Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Forsyth, said: "The whole thing is just a dog's breakfast. They are making it up as they go along. Labour's latest U-turn - they are on two a week now - betrays the total impotence of George Robertson and his Scottish party, under the domination of London."

"Not since Spartacus led the revolt of the slaves have we seen such a cruel abuse of power, with Scottish Labour's hapless leaders crucified along the Road to Manifesto."

He later told BBC Radio 4's *World at One* programme that he thought Mr Robertson had been betrayed by his leader. "This policy has been made in Islington and made by people who have little understanding or sensitivity towards the interests of Scotland," he said.

Jim Wallace, the Liberal Democrat spokesman on Scottish affairs, told the same programme that Labour had "driven themselves into a cul-de-sac and they are trying now to get out".

The leader of the Scottish National Party, Alex Salmond, claimed Labour's position on devolution had "descended into black farce".

He said: "No one in Scotland trusts the Labour Party any longer. They change their stance - even on something as fundamental as our constitutional future - whenever Tony Blair coughs... It is that dictatorial policy-making by remote control from London, in which the priority is to woo Tory voters in Middle England, that has created this almost unbelievable mess."



Museum piece: BR's tilting train, the APT, was a failure

Tilting train makes return trip to Britain

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

Tilting trains are set to make a comeback on the British rail network as the company which runs the East Coast Main Line is set to order two sets for a high speed service between London and Edinburgh.

Tilting trains were to have been introduced in Britain a decade ago but the prototype Advanced Passenger Train was consigned to York Railway Museum after a disastrous few weeks in service when it suffered continual breakdown and passengers had a very uncomfortable ride.

Despite the British experience, tilting trains have now become an established part of the Swedish and Italian railways as they allow high speed trains to travel on conventional tracks with relatively sharp bends. The newest generation of trains use electronic equipment originally designed to allow tanks travelling on rough terrain to keep their gun barrels permanently aimed at a target.

Sea Containers, which took over the line six months ago, says it needs new trains because of growth in the number of passengers. It has approached the manufacturers of the two successful tilt trains currently in use in Europe, Adtranz which makes the tilting Swedish K2000 trains and Fiat which manufactures the Pendolino trains used in Italy, with the intention of placing orders "in the near future" for two train sets.

The chairman of Sea Containers, James Sherwood, said: "We are planning to order two train sets very soon. We want to bring the travel time between Edinburgh and London down to three and a half hours, from just

under four hours. We are starting a schedule next year of three hours 59 minutes but we don't think we can do any faster with the existing rolling stock." Trains would stop once, probably at Newcastle. This would make the line much more competitive with airlines.

The two tilting trains would be used as the peak hour morning train, probably the 8am in each direction, and return in the peak hour in the evening. The trains could be introduced on the east coast within three years. While Railtrack is examining the possibility of using tilting trains on the West Coast Main Line, that requires a complete refurbishment of the line. Sea Containers is confident that it is possible to schedule the train, but between Peterborough and London there is a problem over line capacity and Sea Containers hopes that Railtrack can be persuaded to add more passing loops on that section.

Roger Ford, technical editor of *Modern Railways*, said that the existing rolling stock on the East Coast Main Line was built to enable it to be used on tilting trains: "They would have to change the bogies but that is a relatively small cost."

However, he is sceptical that tilting trains are viable without massive investment in signalling. While the existing trains can cruise at 140mph and reached 154mph in a test last June, changes to the signalling system would be needed to allow the trains to run regularly above 125mph. Mr Ford said: "Even if it went for 140mph for long periods of the journey, it would only shave a quarter of an hour or so off the overall journey time. It would need to run at 160mph to bring the journey down by half an hour."

Newbury protesters take battle to the boardroom



NIGEL COPE

Newbury bypass protesters continued their fight against the controversial road yesterday when they disrupted the annual meeting of shareholders in Costain, the beleaguered construction company which has won the contract to build it.

Friends of the Earth displayed banners showing slogans such as "Costain: on the road to bankruptcy" and "New Costain, New Danger", an echo of the Tories' "demon eyes" campaign.

Inside the Queen Elizabeth conference centre in Westminster, anti-road protesters who have obtained Costain shares chanted for the board resign. The opening address of the chairman, Sir Christopher Benson, was drowned out with slow-handclapping and shareholders queued up to harrass the board.

One shareholder received a standing ovation when she said: "You are tarnishing the company's reputation and image. You don't have a hope in hell of surviving into the 21st century if you continue [with the road]. I suggest you withdraw from the Newbury bypass."

Road to ruin: Guards trying to prevent angry shareholders from reaching Costain executive at yesterday's AGM in London Photograph: Rob Todd

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news

Shetland counts the cost of its missing Klondikers



East European seamen brought money and colour to the islands. Now fish quotas have driven them away

STEVE BOGGAN

All gold rushes come to an end but for some the loss is emotional as well as financial. So it is with the people of Lerwick in Shetland, who this year have said goodbye to the Klondikers, thousands of eastern European seamen who brought colour – and money – to the town while buying up cheap herring and mackerel.

Over the past 15 years, as many as 100 factory ships from Russia, Poland, East Germany, Bulgaria and Romania have tied up outside the harbour for up to eight months of the year to buy the local fishermen's stocks. But this year, they have

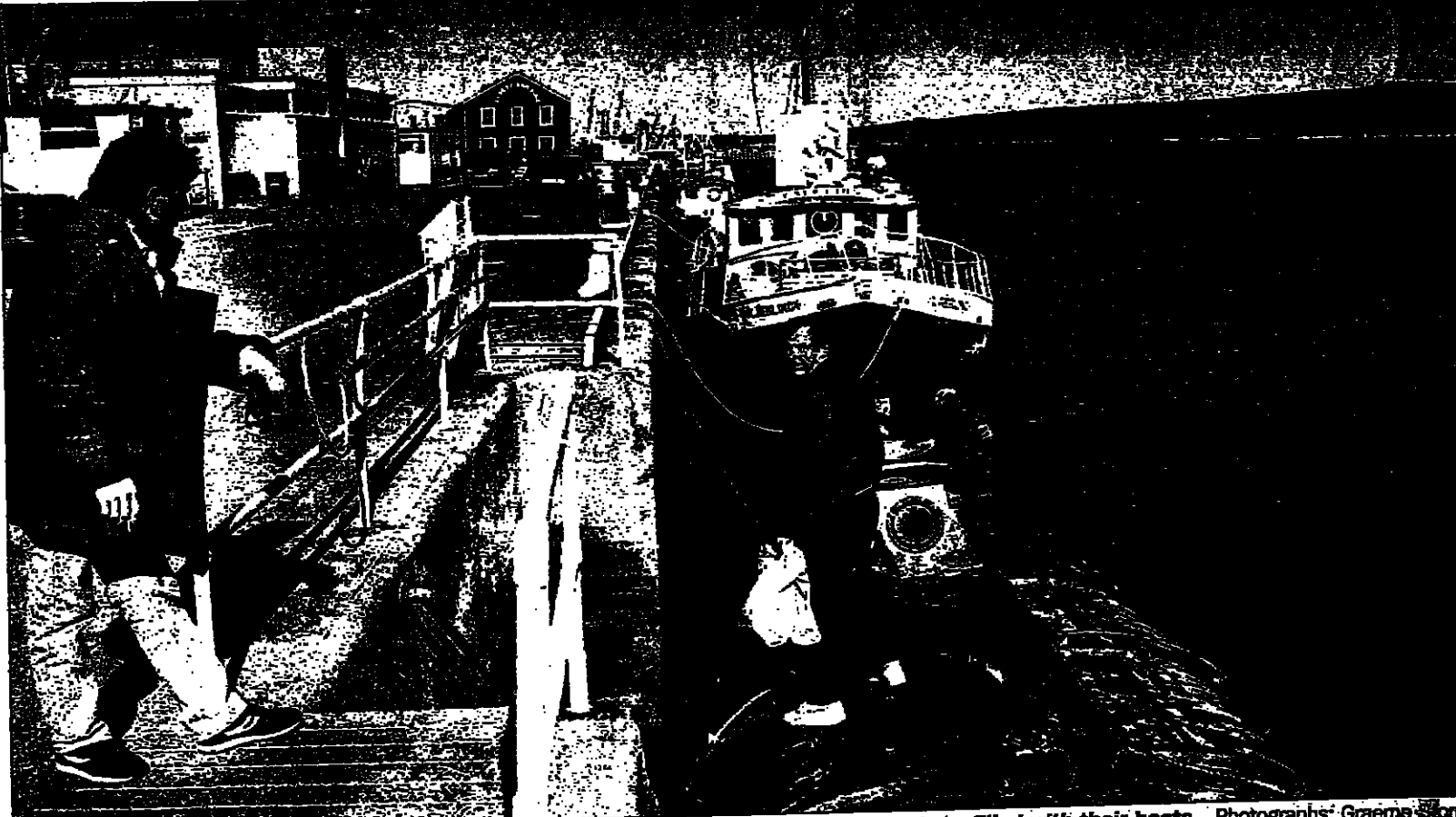
gone, driven away by reduced European Union fishing quotas that have seen prices double.

Local shopkeepers are suffering a minor recession with the absence of the Klondikers because, although they had very little money to spend, there were as many as 7,000 at any time, a figure that doubled the town's population.

"We knew it couldn't last forever, so no one really accounted for their presence in long-term business plans, but they did bring an added boost to the local economy," said Drew Tulloch, a director of Hughton Brothers wholesalers, which used to supply meat and vegetables to the Klondikers.

"They didn't have much money, but they would save up for electrical goods like televisions and videos. Aside from that, they were always very polite and friendly and colourful. They always went back to their boats by 6pm and they never caused any trouble. I think they will be missed for more than just their money."

With the reduction in the herring and mackerel quotas, local fish are too expensive for the eastern Europeans, who have returned to their own markets. Shetland fishermen are now selling their catches in Denmark and Norway where they can demand around £350 a tonne for herring, compared with the



Leaving of Lerwick: Klondikers prepare to head home to Europe; and (above left) the harbour filled with their boats

Photographs: Graeme Murray

Klondikers' price of about £120. Sadly, the place on Commercial Street, Lerwick centre's main high street, where the Klondikers are being missed is a charity shop. Excited Russians were regular visitors to Save the Children, buying up clothes for family members at home.

"They used to get shopping catalogues while they were over here and take them home for their wives," said Violet Lanson, who runs the charity shop. "Then they would come back with pages torn from the catalogues and buy the nearest

thing we had to what their wives had chosen. They only earned about £15 a month, so they saw us as a good source of clothing.

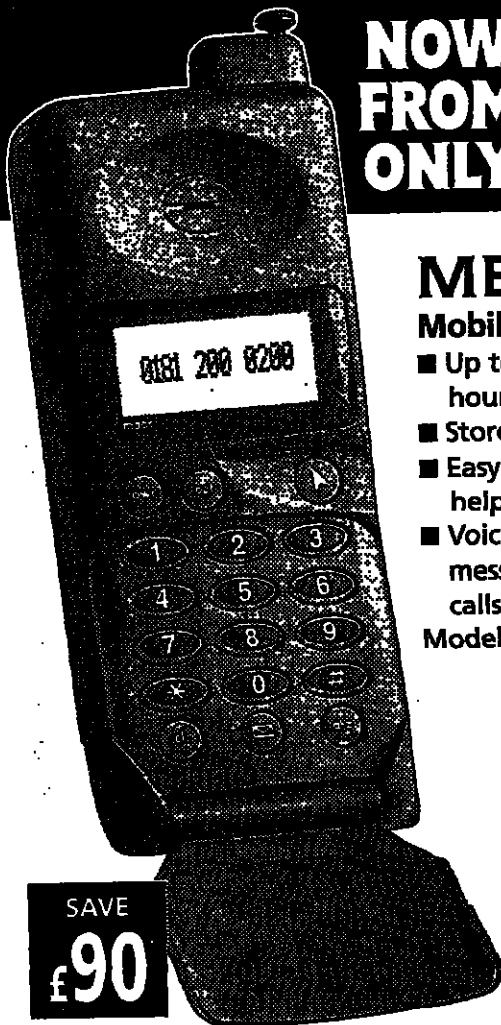
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SANYO Cordless Phone 12 number memory, tone/pulse switchable, Model CTS12, Was £39.99.	CURRYS PRICE £10	SANYO Cordless Phone 12 number memory, tone/pulse switchable, Model CTS12, Was £39.99.	CURRYS PRICE £79.99
BT 'FREESTYLE' Cordless Phone 100 metre range, intercom facility, between base and handset, 18 number memory, Model FREESTYLE 120, Was £59.99.	CURRYS PRICE £129.99	BT 'FREESTYLE' Cordless Phone 100 metre range, intercom facility, between base and handset, 18 number memory, Model FREESTYLE 120, Was £59.99.	CURRYS PRICE £89.99
PHILIPS Digital Cordless Phone 18 number memory, tone/pulse switchable, Model 72057, Was £199.99.	CURRYS PRICE £199.99	PHILIPS Digital Cordless Phone 18 number memory, tone/pulse switchable, Model 72057, Was £199.99.	CURRYS PRICE £199.99

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BT Answer Machine Remote access facility, Time/Date Stamp, Memo facility, Available in blue or green, Model RESPONSE 50, Was £59.99.	CURRYS PRICE £34.99	BT Answer Machine Remote access facility, Time/Date Stamp, Memo facility, Available in blue or green, Model RESPONSE 50, Was £59.99.	CURRYS PRICE £34.99

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Diplomat jailed over hoard of child porn

Robert Coghlan, a diplomat, was jailed for three years yesterday for smuggling a hoard of 'filthy' child pornography into Britain. The divorced father of two, the first British envoy to be convicted of such an offence, spent thousands of pounds in Japanese sex-shops.

Coghlan, 54, was building up his illicit video collection when he helped the Princess of Wales around Tokyo last year. He ended up with the biggest consignment of paedophile material seized by Customs recently - sacks of tapes depicting boys as young as 11 being abused.

Passing sentence at Southwark Crown Court, Judge Gerald Butler QC told the former first secretary: "There is no evidence... that you used or intended to use this obscene material for any purpose other than for your own sexual gratification but a custodial sentence is inevitable. I am satisfied beyond doubt that you always knew that large numbers of these video cassettes involved the exploitation, abuse and degradation of children. If it were not for men such as you to provide a market for this filth, there would be no incentive for others to manufacture and sell them for their own profit."

Coghlan, of Danbury Street, Islington, north London, was found guilty on Thursday of one charge of smuggling 109 obscene videos into Britain last March. The court heard he worked four and a half years in Tokyo. When told he was being transferred to Madrid, he "desperately" tried to ensure his "precious" films arrived safely. He hoped his status and a false last-minute declaration that he had no prohibitive goods among his shipped belongings would be enough. But Customs men searched some of his luggage and found the tapes. Coghlan's defence was that as he had always believed his belongings would be shipped directly to Spain, he could never have had any intention of smuggling them into Britain.

When he found they were coming here, he had "no option" but to lie on a Customs clearance form. Denying he was a paedophile, he insisted he ended up with the videos only because he could not properly translate the labels. Coghlan said that he had never been certain what he was buying, an assertion rejected by the judge.

A government spokesman said Coghlan's case was being examined under the Foreign Office's disciplinary procedure. A Foreign Office spokesman refused to say whether Coghlan's dismissal was a foregone conclusion.

However, another source said it was "inconceivable" that the envoy would be kept on.

most notorious terrorists to address the audience through taped and videotaped messages. Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad, leader of the Al-Muhajirun movement which was holding the rally, insisted to the last moment that the meeting would go ahead despite pressure from governments at home and abroad. But the organisation was forced to change its mind when it was unable to pay for the additional security set at three times higher than normal after discussions with police.

Alex McCrindle, the venue's general manager, said they had received Muslim groups before and had been unaware that the Al-Muhajirun organisation was any different. He said the organisers could not meet the increased costs "and therefore in the interests of safety we have no alternative but to cancel the meeting."

Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad was unavailable to comment on the decision to cancel.

Islam rally called off as costs soar

LOUISE JURY

A planned rally by Islamic fundamentalists which had alarmed Middle Eastern governments and British Jews was cancelled yesterday after the organisers were unable to meet rising security costs for the event.

More than 9,000 tickets had been sold for the "Rally for Islamic Revival" at the London Arena in Docklands tomorrow, called to discuss the way forward to a single Islamic state dominating the world.

But the venue management became increasingly concerned that normal levels of security would prove inadequate as controversy mounted and the threat of attacks and protests outside the event increased.

Pressure culminated in a strong warning from the Home Office two days ago that any rally speeches made in support of terrorism or violence would not be tolerated. Fears had centred on plans for some of the world's

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**Important announcement
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To protect investors' interests, dealing was suspended in three Morgan Grenfell Funds on Monday 2nd September 1996. Morgan Grenfell European Growth Trust, Morgan Grenfell Europa Fund and Morgan Grenfell European Capital Growth Fund.

The reason dealing was suspended was because we were unable to value certain holdings within these funds.

Dealing resumed on Thursday 5th September 1996 in all three funds.

Our parent company Deutsche Bank bought all the holdings in all the companies where we were unhappy with valuations. This amounted to £180m.

We have appointed a new Fund Manager for the European Growth Trust and European Capital Growth Fund called

Stuart Mitchell. Stuart has enormous experience managing European Equities and an excellent track record.

Julian Johnston, who is the head of Morgan Grenfell's European Equity Team has taken over the running of the Europa Fund.

We are confident that our European Equity Team will be able to deliver the strong performance they have achieved elsewhere for other clients.

We would like to apologise sincerely for the obvious concern that these recent events have caused investors, and would like to reassure investors that we are working hard to ensure investors' confidence in Morgan Grenfell is fully restored and enhanced by the measures we are taking.

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هكذا من الأصل

If imitation is the height of flattery, then those demon eyes get the vote

JACK O'SULLIVAN

September is beginning to look like the demon's month. All over the country, satanic eyes stare down from posters. Virgin Atlantic is busy attacking British Airways and its partner American Airlines with an ad featuring a devilish Robert Ayling, BA chief executive, and his opposite number at American Airlines, Virgin's slogan is "BA-AA Merger. Real Danger". Meanwhile, Virgin Direct is trading on its chairman's image with a demonic Richard Branson and the question, "Does the insurance industry have cause to fear this man?"

Elsewhere, the reborn Punch has gone for eyes on its cover and the chart-topping dance band, Babylon Zoo, has posters out with its lead singer, Jas Mann, displaying a diabolic gaze. "New Single: New Danger" is the slogan. The new single is entitled "The boy with the X-ray eyes".

The Tories are convinced that their advert has struck a chord

All of which delights Conservative Central Office, where there is considerable pleasure that the campaign, designed by M&C Saatchi, has had such a ripple effect. Officially the party is tight-lipped: "Our eyes are doing well. What other people do is their own business," a spokesman said. But the mimicry has convinced the party that it has struck a chord.

Labour is less convinced that the Tories have got it right. It says that spoofs of the image by other advertisers are proof that the original is not taken seriously. A spokesman said: "It is seen as an object of derision. It does not work politically. The fact that it is being lampooned speaks its own message."

The genre of the derivative advertisement is well established. Famously, when Wonderbra launched its latest product, fronted with the message, "Hello boys" from the uplifting model Eva Herzigova, Guinness booked adjacent sites for posters starring Billy

Connolly. He was saying "Hello girls" and clutching bottles of Kaliber, a low-alcohol beer designed to prevent "brewer's droop".

A Levi's ad featuring a young man stripping in a laundrette and throwing his jeans into a washing machine has been copied by Carling. Viv Waik, art director of Saatchi and Saatchi, said: "Carling even went to the trouble of hiring the guy's brother. The onlookers say he must drink Carling Black Label."

Harley-Davidson adverts playing on sick ruthlessness have been widely imitated. In one, an old man with a Zimmer frame talks about having been promised an operation by his son, but it's not possible because the son is saving up for a Harley. There are echoes of this in a new Stella advert which shows a man saving to buy his poor mother a pair of fancy shoes. In the end, however, he goes for a Stella, fixes his mother's old shoes with a beer mat and in the final shot the barmaid is seen in the fancy shoes.

Films also provide the raw material for derivative advertising. The iconic violence of Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction* is reflected in a Toshiba advertisement in which the character Tosh stands over a victim with a gun. Likewise, the style magazine *Don't Tell It* was launched with a sequence showing a man talking crazily to the camera and being shot by a woman 16 times just as he revealed the magazine's title. And Tarantino references could be seen in the club magazine, *Dazed and Confused*, which has run pictures of models with blood running down their legs.

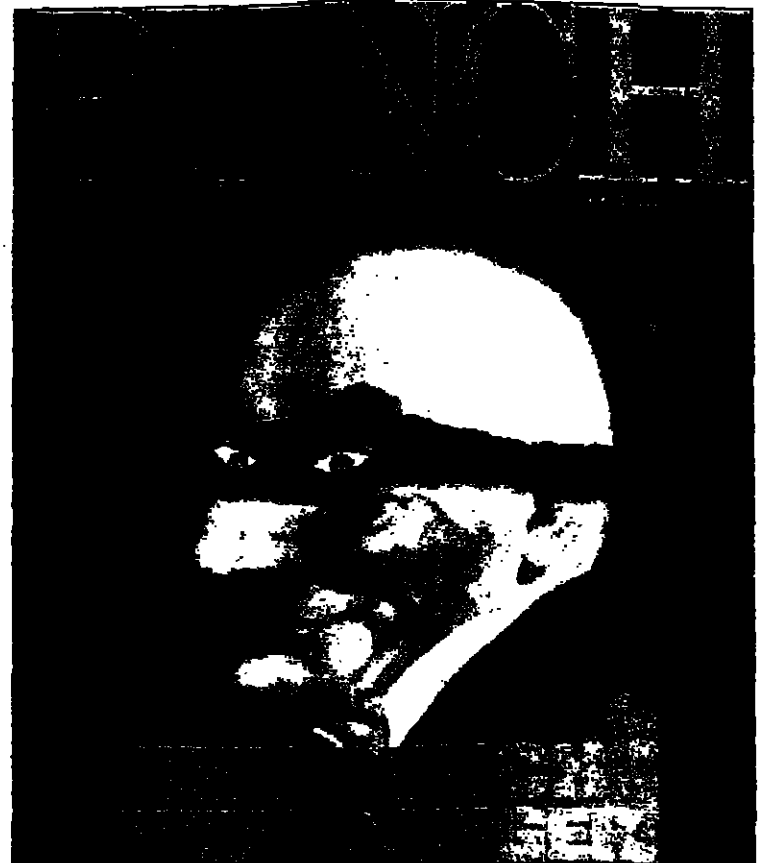
Most advertising agencies, however, think it is a mistake to imitate the campaigns of others. "It's good for the person being copied, but not for the copier," according to Trevor Beattie, creative director of TBWA. "It's a cheap shot. All you do is sell the product you are mimicking. That's all people remember."

But no one is surprised that the "eyes" are appearing everywhere. Political advertising is the most widely parodied and mimicked, because there is so much money behind it, the issues it tackles are so controversial and the ads are so comprehensively reported and commented upon in the national media.

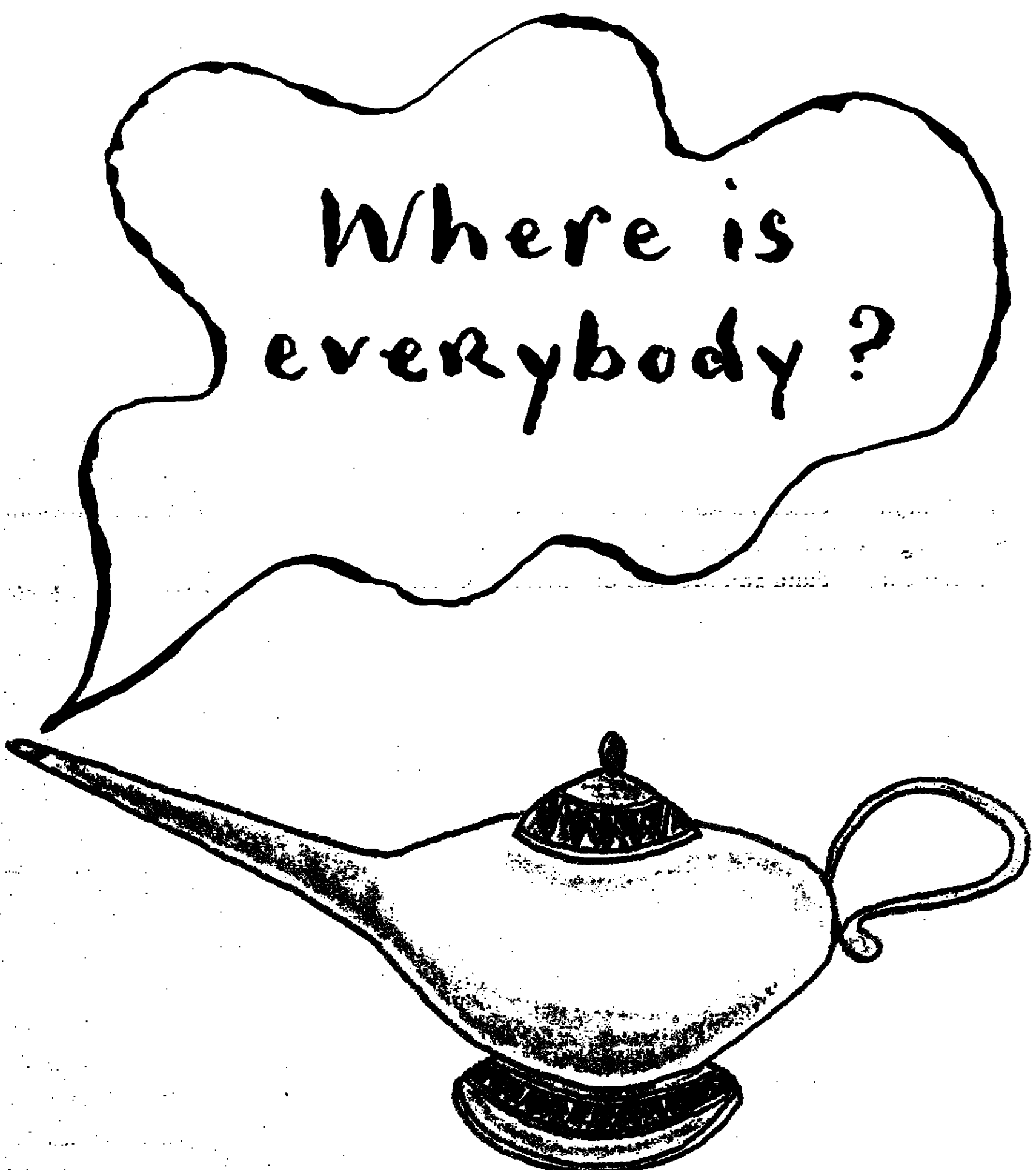
Advertisers are, however, divided about the impact of the

Tory "eyes" campaign and whether imitation is good news. Jo Tarnier of Saatchi and Saatchi believes it helps the Tories. "Even if an ad is spoofing the Tory version, it is playing implicit homage to the original idea. Every time the image is reused, the message is that this was a good advert, it was right."

Trevor Beattie, who has helped Labour in a personal capacity, disagrees. "If I were the Tories, I would be nervous. The more this image becomes jolly, fun and friendly, the more their message about Tony Blair is diluted and the better for Labour."



Spitting Images: The original Wonderbra advertisement featuring Eva Herzigova provided easy material Billy Connolly. The reborn Punch is one of many subjects for spoofs of the 'New Labour, New Danger' demon eyes of the Conservative campaign



Get the facts about HRT

Any woman approaching or going through the menopause today has the option of taking HRT - the biggest (and most controversial) issue in women's health since the advent of the Pill. *Understanding HRT and the Menopause* arms you with the essential facts to decide if it's right for you.

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Understanding HRT and the Menopause gives women the opportunity to take control at a challenging time in their lives and make a truly informed, responsible decision about their health. The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux went so far as to say it "would recommend it unreservedly to all women". Why don't you invest in a copy today?

Understanding HRT and the Menopause costs just £9.99 (P&F FREE). To order, send your name and address, the book title and your payment (cheque made payable to Which? Ltd or credit card number with expiry date) to: *Which?*, PO Box 89, Dept SP99, Hertford, SG14 1TB. Orders are normally despatched within 14 days of receipt. Full refund if not satisfied.

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arts news

edited by David Lister

Gambaccini sells his soul ... and rock 'n' roll



The DJ Paul Gambaccini with some of the 15,000 singles which he is selling at Sotheby's along with 5,000 albums Photograph: Tony Buckingham

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Correspondent

Paul Gambaccini, the Radio 3 disc jockey who leaves the station later this month, is to sell his vast record collection. Dating from 1955 to 1990, it is a library of virtually every UK and US top 40 record in that period. While the majority are singles – 15,000 of them – there are also 5,000 albums, many rare. Mr Gambaccini, who also presents the Radio 4 arts show *Kaleidoscope*, began buying records as a teenager. But his youthful enthusiasm was dampened by his father who forbade him – mistakenly as it turned out – from buying singles because they were a waste of money. It was not until Mr Gambaccini left home that he could indulge his passion, and he bought a lot of his early records from a shop in Times Square, New York, which sold old juke box singles. "That way I could quickly get to accumulate the hits of the Sixties that my father didn't allow me to buy," he said yesterday. "He forbade me from buying singles because he thought that singles were an example of planned obsolescence." Ironically, Mr Gambaccini is one of the few who could make big money from his col-

lection, which would be worth at least £80,000 if broken up. As it is being sold by Sotheby's in one lot, it is estimated at a much lower £15,000 to £20,000. The DJ began collecting seriously when he worked in college radio when studying history at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, and then while reading PPE at Oxford. During his career, which has included stints on Radio 1 and Classic FM, he has been sent thousands of records but he was always a "fanatic" and was unable to stop buying his own. Mr Gambaccini kept his records and CDs on floor-to-ceiling shelves in a bedroom in his north London house. He made the decision to sell when he filled his last CD shelf – he couldn't bear to give up another room. "My record room had become all records and no room," he said. "Something had to go and I thought it should be the vinyl. I can't use it any longer in radio stations because they have all gone to CD." Among his favourites to be sold are James Brown's anti-drugs public service announcements of the Sixties, the *Stax* *Stay In School* album and Motown stars such as Marvin Gaye sending greetings to the Motown Appreciation Society. The sale is on September 18.

Doctor of spin tipped to be master of arts

Whenever two or more artspeople are gathered together, it seems to be the main topic of conversation: who will be Secretary of State for the National Heritage if Labour wins the election? The loud whisper coming from them as should know is that it will be Peter Mandelson, aka as spin doctor supreme. He is rather more arty than is generally known. He is a trustee of the Whitechapel Art Gallery and is on the board of the English National Ballet, at whose functions he has been spotted deep in conversation with the ENB's patron, the Princess of Wales on matters balletic. A frenetic disco dancer himself, Mr Mandelson has not yet taken to the floor with the ENB patron.

Artspeople
with David Lister

The Swan pictured below will, as Mr Mandelson no doubt knows, be part of the first ballet to play a season at a West End theatre since Diaghilev's *The Sleeping Princess* in 1921. An extremely raunchy *Swan Lake*, presented by Adventures In Motion Pictures, choreographed by Matthew Bourne with swans that are chaps, will have almost as many dancers in the audience as on the stage at the Piccadilly Theatre for Wednesday's first night, among them Dame Alicia Markova, Natalia Makarova, Lynn Seymour, Darcey Bussell and Viviana Durante.



Raunchy: Adam Cooper as Swan Photo: Hugo Glendinning

Irvine Welsh's new play *Marabou Stork Nightmares*, the follow-up to *Trainspotting* which started life on the stage, premieres in England at the Leicester Haymarket Theatre on 20 September. Will the chronicler of urban squalor and underclass nihilism change his spots and give us a tender love story or drawing room comedy perhaps? Make up your own mind from this. The plot, adapted from Welsh's own novel, is described on the Haymarket's advertising thus: "The play plunges into the comatose brain of Roy Strang who recalls being randomly battered, is forced by his hardman father to box his camp elder brother, terrorises a teenage girl at knife-point, sexually abuses a younger boy at school, participates in a sickeningly brutal gang rape and viciously tortures a dog that once bit him."

Bragg makes cash plea for TV's new talent

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

Melvin Bragg yesterday threw down the gauntlet to Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, by challenging her to pledge half of ITV's annual levy of £370m to encouraging the work of young programme-makers. The writer and broadcaster said the money should be put into one or two of the newly available television channels, or threaded through the sector, to give people aged under 35 the chance to make programmes. "We are rich in the amount of talent coming through the broadcasting industry. We are increasingly poor at training that talent. We are even poorer at finding places for that talent to grow," Mr Bragg said. "The worst part of my job is turning down ideas by good people. I am sure this happens to editors and commissioning editors all over the system. But the number of young people now coming on line need a budget and they need somewhere to show their wares."

Such revenue could become crucial as competition in the commercial sector intensifies with the launch of Channel 5 in January and the rapid growth of the satellite and cable companies. ITV will also see a substantial drop in its income following Channel 4's success in throwing off its requirement to pay a proportion of its profit to the ITV companies under the notorious "funding formula". Mr Bragg said he had first mentioned the idea to Mrs Bottomley at a breakfast at the Ritz about a year ago. Nothing had been done, so now he was saying it publicly. "Surely one government or another in the next 12 months can devote this substantial amount of money – half the tax on a non-existent [advertising] monopoly – to channels which would invest in this talent?" "And with Lottery money and good management we

might at last begin to punch our full weight in the world of television and films. Young, talented programme and film-makers needed "decent" outlets and while they have been until now supplied by the BBC and Channel 4, they were in danger of breaking down. "With the end of long-term contracts, with the breaking-up of creative clusters which gave us so many of our best programmes, with the setting aside of training programmes ... we are threatening to destroy a fine and profitable tradition," Mr Bragg said. He had started his career as a BBC trainee in 1961. While it was difficult to break into television in those days, it had become far harder to get the chance to make and show high-quality work. If Mrs Bottomley did not take heed, Britain "will wither into world-wide wannabes, left at the post," Mr Bragg concluded. His speech echoes a similar lament last year by Andy Allen, now director of programmes at Carlton, who warned that television was failing to invest in its future and no longer giving senior jobs to young talent.

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MATSUI 4400	44" SAMSUNG CONTROL TV. 30m video screen size. Was £299.99	SAVE £10	SALE PRICE £289.99
HITACHI 2200	21" ICAM STEREO TV WITH FASTEST 30m video screen size. Was £329.99	SAVE £20	SALE PRICE £309.99
GOLDSTAR 1200	COMBINED 14" TV AND VIDEO. 34cm video screen size. Was £349.99	SAVE £20	SALE PRICE £329.99
SONY 1000	21" ICAM STEREO TV WITH FASTEST 30m video screen size. Was £699.99	SAVE £100	SALE PRICE £599.99

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LEXMARK 4400	COLOUR BULLET PRINTER. Was £249.99	SAVE £20	SALE PRICE £229.99

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AIWA 4400	MULTIPLAY CD MINOR HI-FI. 15m video screen size. Was £399.99	SAVE £50	SALE PRICE £349.99
AIWA 4400	MULTIPLAY CD MINOR HI-FI. 15m video screen size. Was £499.99	SAVE £50	SALE PRICE £449.99

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Panasonic 4400	PORTABLE HI-FI. 15m video screen size. Was £79.99	FREE MINI SPEAKERS	SALE PRICE £79.99
SONY 4400	PORTABLE HI-FI. 15m video screen size. Was £119.99	SAVE £10	SALE PRICE £109.99
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FOR THE SAADAM

Kurds feel doomed by fickleness of West

Suleymaniye - Two unflappable British aid workers contemplated their dilemma in the empty hall of the United Nations building here yesterday as the shadow of President Saddam Hussein lengthened over northern Iraq.

"Even the landmines are more predictable than the politics here," said one of the two, glumly weighing up the risks of years in jail if they fell into the hands of Iraqi forces against the thought of abandoning four years trying to help the Iraqi Kurds recover from decades of war and oppression. The Britons decided to stay on, against the advice of the Foreign Office and did not want their names in any papers the Iraqis might read. Similar fears after the most powerful Iraqi Kurd faction aligned itself with Baghdad had persuaded other non-governmental organisations to leave already.

Outside the house rented by the US Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (OSDA) stood four disconsolate Iraqi Kurds. The last five local OSDA staff left yesterday morning, with their families. "They didn't even pay us for last month. There's a houseful of computers and equipment in there. Will they ever be coming back?" asked one of the guards.

A sense of doom has been

Hugh Pope finds despair and anger as the aid workers quit and Saddam's grim shadow grows

gathering over Suleymaniye over the past week as the West's security guarantees for Iraqi Kurdistan have been shown to be more psychological than real. This city, the most sophisticated in Iraqi Kurdistan and a long-established capital, may be well clear of current fighting but it is also well south of the allied "no-fly zone" north of the 36th parallel.

Clauses continued yesterday on the road between Suleymaniye, which is controlled by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and Arbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, seized last Saturday from the PUK by forces of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), backed by Iraqi army tanks and artillery.

Requisitioned buses took a battalion of PUK fighters from Suleymaniye to the front line 30km east of Arbil. PUK ribbons and sprigs of fir trees hung from the gun barrels and rockets poking out of the bus windows. A man behind a heavy machine-gun said he intended to "do some slaughtering".

There was no independent confirmation of PUK allegations that Iraqi heavy weapons

were again fighting with the KDP. On the PUK side, however, I saw two unmarked Toyota Land Cruisers of a type used in Iran. Inside, groups of men looking like Islamic Revolutionary Guards were heading towards the front line, although not before taking a wrong turn. "Those Iraqis are always getting lost, driving by their map," said an Iraqi Kurd guerrilla at a PUK check-point as the vehicle headed cautiously over the hills to the fighting.

The PUK has allowed the Iraqis to operate in their territory for the past six weeks, one of the KDP's reasons for tilting towards Baghdad. The PUK leader, Jalal Talabani, has threatened to call in more Iranian support if he feels Suleymaniye itself is threatened.

But while the Iraqi Kurds pursue their factional feuding, and while Baghdad, Tehran and Ankara manoeuvre for strategic advantage, it is the people of the hungry and impoverished town who are suffering.

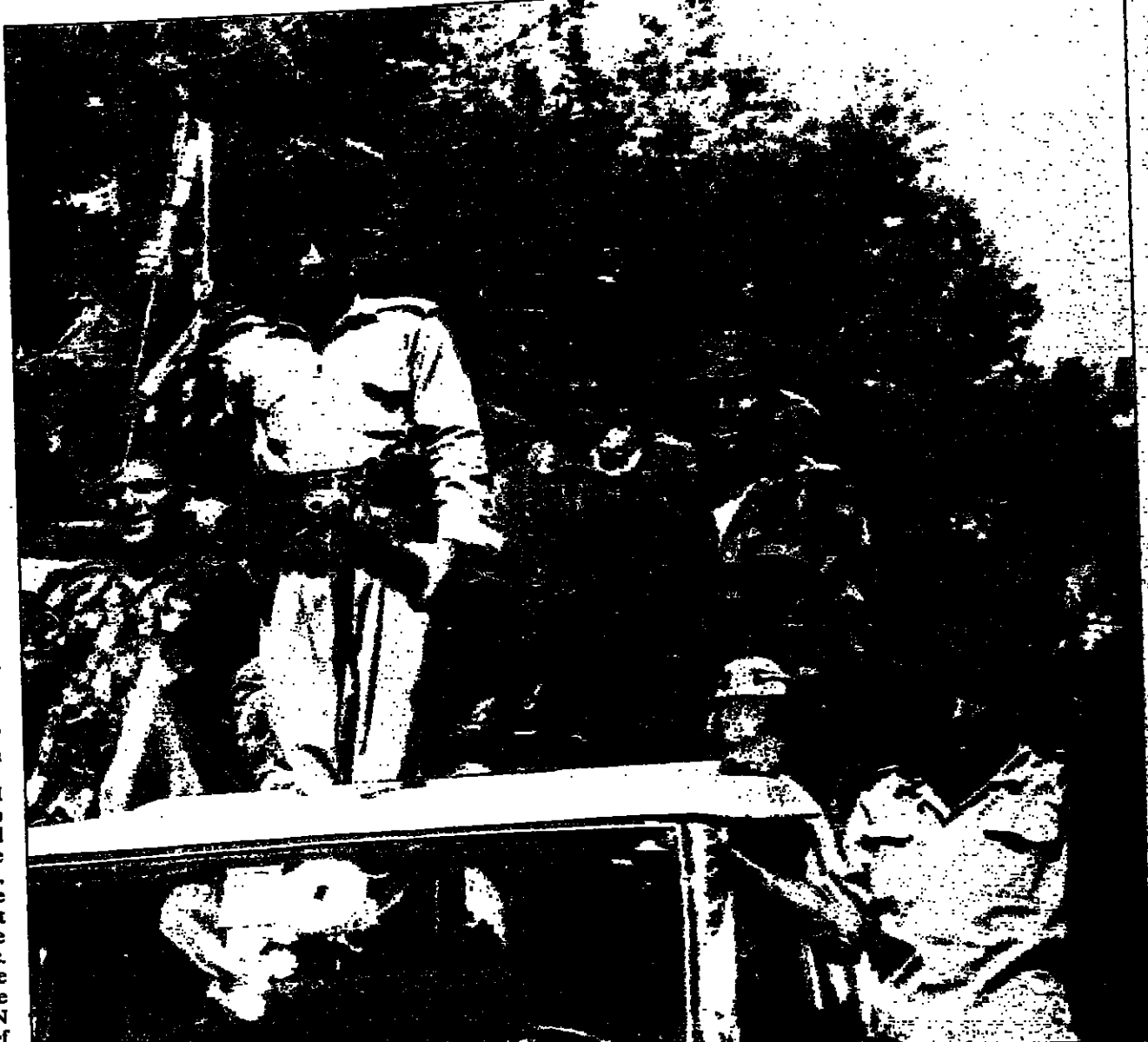
"For five years we have been waiting for the United Nations, the United States. Nothing's changed, nothing's happened,"

said a former watch-mender, Abdurrahman Sharis. "If the United States really wants to help us, it would allow the food-for-oil deal to go through. We are still very poor. People are very tired. We want to live," Mr Sharis said. "And tell me why are all the aid agencies going?"

The 30-odd international aid workers still in northern Iraq fear not only for their personal safety - there have been many apparently Iraqi attacks on aid workers in the past - but for that of their staff. Said one: "Listen to this mail we got from (KDP-controlled) Zakho: 'Today KDP forces came to our office and demanded a list of our employees. I denied that I had it, and subsequently burned all records'. Another said: 'KDP guerrillas are now stationed outside our warehouses'."

Even a few official United Nations staff have asked to move away from areas affected by the conflict. But some, like the much-maligned UN guards, are determined to fly the blue and white UN flag to prevent any feelings of local unease changing to fear and panic. "It's at times like this that we are supposed to be here. There is no need to evacuate the UN presence," said Paul Dahl, chief of security for the United Nations in northern Iraq.

Letters, page 15



Driving force: KDP fighters patrol in Arbil near the house of their ousted rival, Jalal Talabani

Photograph: Reuters

Fighters find a bitter irony in history

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The Kurds trace their history, with some irony, to the defeat of the Assyrians by the Medes at Nineveh, north of Mosul, in the first millennium BC. But from that time on, the Kurds consistently appear as a separate people committed to national self-determination, despite the continuous efforts of the states which still control Kurdistan to deny them their own identity.

The Kurds are scattered across the territory of what is now Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Armenia and Azerbaijan. It is difficult to estimate how many people would form a Kurdish state, or what its borders would look like. According to the Minority Rights Group, there were about 9.6 million Kurds in Turkey in 1987, 5 million in Iran, 4 million in Iraq, 900,000 in Syria and maybe 300,000 in the former Soviet Union.

A Kurdish state would also be difficult to define geographically: it would cover north-eastern Iraq, including Mosul, Arbil and Kirkuk, and south-east Turkey, including Diyarbakir, Lake Van and Mount Ararat - the legendary resting place of Noah's ark. Overall, it would be about the size of France, centred on the Taurus and Zagros mountains. But many people in the area would not be Kurdish, one of the intractable problems of changing international borders.

The Kurds' language is related to Persian and has much in common with other Indo-European languages, including English. But the dialects are often not understood by other Kurds, and this has been used to assert that they are not in fact one people.

The Ottoman Turks used the Kurds to patrol their eastern frontier, much as the Russians used the Cossacks and the Austro-Hungarian Empire used the Serbs of the Krajina - the border.

The most recent events in Kurdistan, in which one Kurdish faction has summoned Saddam Hussein to help against another, would be familiar to any student of Kurdish history. As a League of Nations memorandum of 1930 said: "The Kurds of Iraq are entirely lacking in those characteristics of political cohesion which are essential to self-government. Nothing much, it seems, has changed."

Washington (AP) - The United States saw "positive developments" in northern Iraq with Saddam Hussein having pulled his forces south, but it was too soon to say the matter was resolved, William Perry, the Defence Secretary, said.

As well as withdrawing from the Kurdish town of Arbil, Iraq's forces had stopped shelling the town of Chamchamal, south-east of Arbil, Mr Perry said.

He knew of no evidence that Turkey had entered the fighting. Turkish government officials said on Thursday that their troops would move into northern Iraq to prevent Kurdish rebels from entering Turkey as they fled fighting there.

The Turkish Foreign Minister, Tansu Ciller, said that

der. A 17th-century traveller described the Kurds as the barrier between the Ottoman Turks and the Persians - a role which was to have a sad and bloody legacy.

In 1880, Sheikh Ubaidullah of Shamdinan launched a Kurdish revolt against the Ottoman empire. He wrote to the British consul: "We want to take matters into our own hands. We can no longer put up with the oppression which the governments of Persia and the Ottoman Empire impose on us". He was defeated by a combination of superior technology and the Kurds' own internal divisions and disorganisation - a problem which has bedevilled Kurdish efforts to gain independence.

Kurdish resistance to the Ottoman Empire was replaced by resistance to the Arabs of the flatlands of Iraq after the latter state was created by Britain in 1918. Following the death of a number of British officers ambushed by the Kurds, the Royal Air Force bombed them.

Revolts continued, and the most recent can be traced back to 1961. Saddam Hussein's hostility to the Kurds probably dates back to the early years of the Ba'ath party, after 1969, when they presented the major threat to his regime. From the mid-1970s, a policy of bulldozing Kurdish villages began. When the allies moved into Kurdistan in 1991, they found just about every village on their maps of northern Iraq bore the word "destroyed" next to it.

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Washington upbeat over Iraqi pull-out

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The Turkish Foreign Minister, Tansu Ciller, said that

Turkey's planned creation of a security zone in northern Iraq had been made necessary by the renewed upheaval there.

She said the cordon would deter infiltration by guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which is fighting to establish self-rule in Turkey's mainly Kurdish south-east.

But echoing other officials who spelled out limited Turkish military goals, Mrs Ciller insisted: "It is going to be temporary kind of activity."

Asked whether the Clinton administration was satisfied that Saddam was complying with US demands to halt his aggression against the Kurds, Mr Perry said: "So far, so good. But I do not want to be complacent on this at all. We will be watching very, very carefully."

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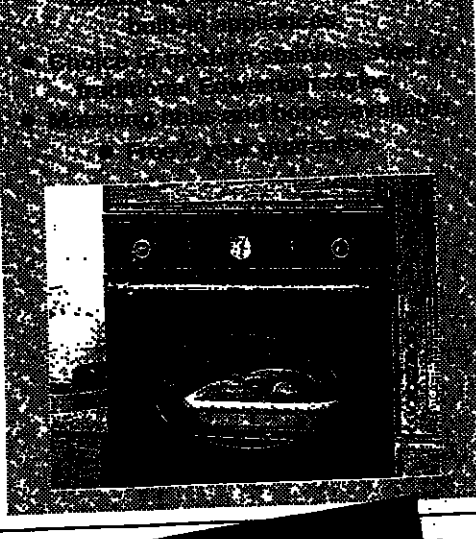
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POLICING SADDAM

Chirac enjoys cocking a snook at America

PIERRE BRIANCON
of Liberation

In the reptilian brain of every French president there slumbers the spectre of Gaullism. The French condemnation of the American bombings of Iraq – which managed to be at once strident and unspoken – is the most recent example. Jacques Chirac is, after all, the first Gaullist president to occupy the Elysée Palace since the death of Georges Pompidou in 1974. By refusing openly to support the actions of Bill Clinton (the man whom he describes as his "friend"), Mr Chirac seized an opportunity to display to the Arab world the difference between French and American policies and sensibilities.

There was also, for sure, a European irritation at being presented with a *fait accompli* and being asked to play along with a domestic American political



Chirac: Marked out French independence from US

game. There was something typically Clintonesque about making the rest of the world hostage to the US electoral timetable – something which irritated even his most faithful allies.

But the French disavowal of the Iraqi escapade flowed also from a mixture of old diplomatic traditions and new commercial interests.

French diplomacy has long been haunted by a rather tired notion – "French policy for the Arab world". According to this, France – by virtue of its history, its location, its interests, and above all by its (Gaullist) tradition of independence from the United States – has a unique

role to play, from Morocco to Iraq, from Lebanon to Libya.

Ideologically, the lobbyists for French Arab policy can be found in the usual bastions of anti-Americanism: from Gaullism to Communism. Sociologically, it springs from a certain tradition in the Foreign Ministry which tends to view relations with American colleagues as a kind of rivalry. Culturally, the lobby is rooted in nostalgia for France as a "great power", capable of going toe to toe with US influence in any part of the world.

The French Arab lobby is, with a few exceptions, synonymous with the forces which laboured for a more sympathetic attitude to the Serbs during the Bosnian war. It also occupies the same ground as those calling for a normalisation of relations with Cuba. Mr Chirac is not himself part of this lobby. But many of his advisers are and it can usually count on his support.

This tradition lives comfortably with the commercial interests of French companies. It is no secret that French oil companies were the first to dash to Baghdad to negotiate contracts after the easing of the UN embargo on Iraq. There was a time when Iraq was one of the best customers for French exports and the leading supplier of Iraqi credit. More than 20 years ago, a young French prime minister, called Jacques Chirac, welcomed to Paris the Iraqi number two, proclaiming affectionately: "You are my friend." His guest was the upwardly mobile Saddam Hussein.

During the Gulf war, France was a loyal member of the coalition against President Saddam. And since he came to power in May last year, Mr Chirac has even announced a rapprochement with Nato, to the consternation of many old Gaullists in his own party.

But in Arab policy it was inevitable that Mr Chirac would one day noisily assert his exceptionalism. The opportunity was muffed when his Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette, tried to negotiate a settlement after Israel attacked Hizbollah in south Lebanon. The fury of US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, cast doubt, even

ridicule, on the French initiative. The attack on Iraq gave Mr Chirac the perfect opportunity to mark out his differences from the US. The surprise is not that he distanced himself from the operation; the surprise is that he did not do it sooner.

It is by no means certain, however, that Mr Chirac will draw political benefit from his decision. French public opinion is hard pressed to understand why we should prefer President Saddam to Mr Clinton. In any case, the French have become increasingly uncomfortable with the apparent eagerness of successive governments to cosy up to the most dictatorial regimes in the world.

The starkly commercial dimension of French foreign policy reinforces this public unease. It seems that French officials are ready to ignore a great deal for the sake of a contract.

Independence from the US can still score points in French domestic politics. But America-bashing has little value when it takes the form of a self-interested friendship with the likes of Saddam Hussein.



Iraqi troops with armoured personnel carrier position themselves 15km south of the Kurdish town of Arbil on Thursday

Photograph: Reuters

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Why the Arabs were so hostile to US attack

Middle-East states may hate Saddam, but they stand by Iraq, writes **Robert Fisk**

Beirut — "Why do the Arabs only like Americans when we're coming to protect them?" The voice was clear down the line to Beirut from the Delaware radio station, an ordinary American reporter who was stunned that the Arabs should be ungrateful for President Clinton's latest bombardment against one of the oldest of Arab lands.

Was it the lack of nuance that made the question so offensive? Or the assumption that firing Cruise missiles at Saddam would somehow give locals the same feel-good factor that Mr Clinton admitted to?

The Saudis and the Turks had sullenly refused permission for America's bombers to take off from their air bases. The Egyptians and Jordanians expressed "concern", leaving it to the Arab League secretary-general to call the American attack "an aggression against the sovereignty of an Arab state".

Al-Ahram, the most prestigious Egyptian newspaper, asked why the US did not intervene when Turkey invaded the Kurdish safe haven in its hunt for communist guerrillas, or when Iran sent its artillery into Iraqi Kurdistan. In Qatar, a paper suggested that Washington "found in the Arabs an easy prey as it fires missiles against them, uses them as a field test for its ... modern weapons".

Even Syria, whose obsessive hatred of Saddam almost matches Mr Clinton's, claimed the attack violated laws against "interference in the internal affairs of other countries".

"America's latest adventure in Iraq – and Washington's irritation at the Arab response – demonstrates yet again the gulf of incomprehension that lies between the Arabs of the Middle East and the world's only superpower. True, Arabs do not like Saddam. Most of them loath him for his arrogance and brutality. But Iraq, the ancient land of the two great rivers of Tigris and Euphrates, home to the Sumerian and Assyrian peoples, the site of Babylon and Ur, traditional bulwark against Persia, is something else. For Iraq is the only Arab country which contains both water and substantial quantities of oil. Syria and Lebanon and

Egypt have water; the Arab Gulf states have oil. But only Iraq possesses both "naphtha" and water, the source of both wealth and survival.

They thus make Iraq the most viable, potentially the strongest nation in the Arab world, a country which captures the imagination of Arabs, however much they fear and revile its current dictator. It promises hope amid humiliation and political defeat. And the Americans have bombarded it again.

The West may blame Saddam for this humiliation and ask why we in the West should not support the other local dictators in the region in our battle against the Beast of Baghdad. Did not Britain make an alliance with Stalinist Russia against Hitler in the Second World War? – I was asked on a BBC discussion programme this week. "This is the question you are being asked to address," came the haughty voice down the line from London. How often have I heard this tired argument?

Back in 1980, I recall a Foreign Office factotum briefing journalists who asked – not unreasonably – whether it was such a good idea for Britain and America to give tacit support to Saddam Hussein after his invasion of Iran. At that time, of course, Iran was supposed to be playing the role of the Third Reich. "Didn't Britain make an alliance with Stalin against Hitler in the Second World War?" Our Man asked indignantly.

Plus ça change. A decade and a half ago, Saddam was Stalin, our ally in the battle against Hitlerian Iran. Now the other Arab leaders, along with their secret policemen, are all Stalin who should be helping us fight Hitlerian Iraq. The trouble is that, five years ago, a man called George Bush asked us to believe in a New World Order, a set of principles which would supposedly put an end to the institutionalised brutality of the Middle East and the self-interest of nation-states.

Oddly, many Arabs put their faith in this short-lived if laudable concept. Yet there was President Clinton this week, talking of America's "interests" in the region: or was that what Mr Bush had in mind?



Storm warning: A building in Wilmington, North Carolina, being battered by the elements as Hurricane Fran approached

Photograph: AP

US vision gives Russia role in a bigger Nato

JOHN LICHFIELD

The United States proposed yesterday that the whole of the former Soviet bloc, including Russia, should be pulled into a "new Atlantic Community". Washington envisages, early in the next century, the establishment of a new European security order in which a larger Nato would have formal security links with all other European countries, including a special treaty with Moscow.

The US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, said in a speech in Germany that Nato would take its first firm decisions on new eastern members next spring. A second wave of candidates would be considered

later. Former East-bloc countries like Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic hoped to receive invitations to negotiate membership at an Alliance summit in Berlin in December. But Mr Christopher said yesterday that the Berlin gathering would now be just a preparatory meeting. Decisions would be postponed until a further sum-

shown signs of easing its implacable opposition to the swallowing up by Nato of former Soviet client states. US officials said Moscow has entered discussions on a long-term Russia-Nato relationship. They said that the Foreign Minister, Vyegeny Primakov, had gone a long way towards defining the Russian national interests that must be considered.

Mr Christopher was delivering a speech in Stuttgart, heavily biased as an important US contribution to the debate on security structures for post Cold War Europe. He proposed, in effect, a two-tier Atlantic community, in which an enlarged Nato would sign formal security agreements with all other interested European countries, through an Atlantic partnership council. Russia would be invited to join this body but it would also be offered a one-on-one relationship with Nato through a special charter.

The plan is an elaboration of the existing, looser links between Nato and non-Nato European nations, called the Partnership for Peace. The aim is to solve a vexatious three-sided puzzle: the aspirations of former Warsaw Pact countries to join Nato as soon as possible; Russian fears that an enlarged Nato would be a political and military coalition against Moscow; and the anxieties of other countries, such as the Ukraine, who fear being squeezed between the two sides.

The Russian government has

Prado architects flop

Madrid — One of Europe's most prestigious architectural contests, to expand Madrid's Prado Museum, ended in chaos yesterday when an international jury of eight architects failed to pick a winner from 10 short-listed projects, writes Elizabeth Nisbet.

The decision leaves the future of the museum, home to one of the world's finest art collections, up in the air. The Culture Minister, Esperanza Aguirre, said none of the projects solved the problems presented by the mu-

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

A blazing, abandoned ship with almost 70,000 Australian sheep on board has gone missing near the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, officials said yesterday. The vessel still had not been found 16 hours after a rescue tug from the Gulf of Aden and a converted car carrier from Karachi, Pakistan, reached the area, an Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation official said.

The *Uniceb*, a 14,990-tonne, Panama-flagged ship, left Fremantle in Western Australia on 23 August on a routine 16-day run to Jordan, Australia's biggest live sheep market. But 400 km (245 miles) east of the Seychelles, an engine-room fire quickly spread, killing one of the ship's 55 crew. The remaining crew abandoned the ship and were picked up by a passing cargo vessel. *Reuter* - Sydney

Two German children were found murdered at a beach-side apartment on the resort island of Mallorca, news agencies said. The national agency EFE said the bodies showed "signs of violence", and that the victims were two sisters, aged 8 and 16. But Europa Press said the victims were an 8-year-old girl and her 6-year-old brother. Europa also said the father, who is missing, was suspected of injecting them with poison, and had left notes saying he intended to commit suicide. *AP - Palma de Mallorca*

Gold worth \$18m (£12m) looted by the Nazis during World War Two and held since then in Britain is to return to Transilvania, Romania, says the Speaker of the Albanian Parliament. He said the government had ratified a memorandum for the gold's return, adding: "A problem created by World War Two and the Communist regime is over." Britain agreed in May 1992 to return the gold in exchange for a payment of \$2m by Albania for the 1946 sinking of two British warships off the Albanian coast, which soured relations between the two countries for decades. Britain and Albania restored full diplomatic relations in May 1991. *Reader - Tirana*

Hong Kong's top judge has resigned to contest the territory's first non-colonial leadership. Chief Justice Sir Ti Liang Yang resigned after he announced earlier this week he would run for the job as Hong Kong's chief executive when Britain hands back the territory to China at midnight on 30 June 1997. Peking, meanwhile, drew cautious applause for signalling it would keep transparent the process of picking the new chief. *Reuter - Hong Kong*

French farmers draped the Arc de Triomphe, Paris, in black in protest against plans to cut European Union grain subsidies to help finance a reform of the beef industry following the BSE crisis. Puzzled tourists looked on as the protesters hung black plastic streamers from the top of the arch. Police stepped in before the monument was fully covered. *Reuter - Paris*

Thieves are stealing South Africa's parliament, according to a police report which lists copper worth 6,500 rand (950) stolen from its roof among 83 thefts reported this year. Other stolen items include ten lengths of curtains, nine computers, five cellular telephones, two microwave ovens, calculators, kettles, sports gear and cash. Rampant theft has plagued the Cape Town legislature since white rule ended in 1994. *Reuter - Cape Town*

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Books special: this autumn's pleasures

IT SHORTS



ARTS

7 Jane Horrocks:
is she the new
Rory Bremner?

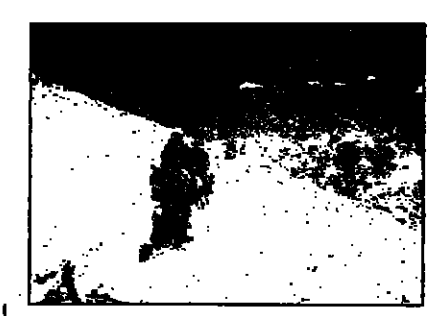
No one doubts she's a brilliant, brilliant mimic. But there are two words of warning for the talented young actress about to star in her own TV comedy show: Emma Thompson.



SHOPPING

11 Goo goo,
gaa gaa,
yum yum?

Fancy a mushroom and sweet pepper risotto served with honey and a pinch of turmeric? Well, if you're seven months old you're in luck – designer baby food has arrived



TRAVEL

15 In the
saddle
up the Andes

'It's fine,' said the guide. 'Just hang on and leave it to your horse. After all, he doesn't want to fall off any more than you do.'

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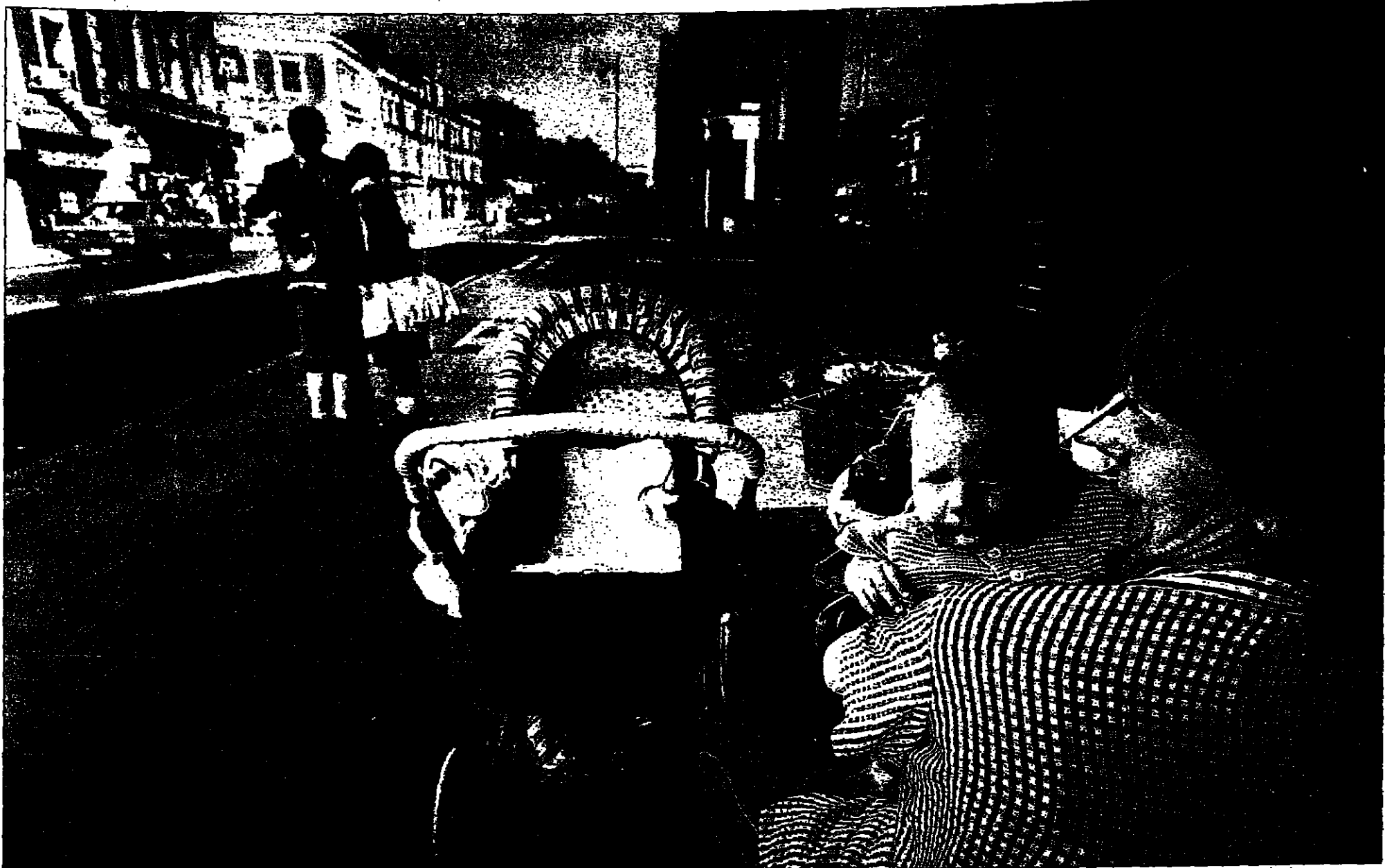
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Baby face: Catherine Bashford, and her 12-week old child, Peter Tunbridge, in Stoke Newington, the hotbed of western European fertility

Photograph: Adrian Dennis

Confessions of a pregnant father

Try to imagine you have a pencil in your anus and you're writing your name with it. Sixteen adults duly stand on all fours. "Full name or just the first?" I gasp as National Childbirth Trust instructor leads us through the physical difficulties of having a baby.

It's our first lesson, appropriately enough in National Pregnancy Week. Eight couples, all of whose babies are due in late October and November, have come seeking enlightenment. We'll be back once a week for the next two months, hoping that, come the EDD - expected date of delivery - we'll not be as green as we are now.

We're in north London, parodied as the home of the refurbished terraced house. Provençal decor, stripped pine floors and anxious, aged first parents. Stoke Newington to be precise, where thirtysomethings breed in a hotbed for human fertility before it's too late. Many gay women also come here to have their children - you can go to a kiddies' party in "Stokey" and meet virtually no dads: they simply don't exist. Perhaps there's something in the water here, but we've got the highest birthrate in western Europe. The one restaurant that dares to ban children has provoked a huge rumpus. And our playground is state of the art.

EastEnders had warned us to expect the worst at the NCT. A few months ago, Kath attended a class and found herself swamped amid incense burners and touchy-feely middleclassdom. Her husband, macho man Phil, wasn't having any of it. "It'll be full of pony men huggin' each other," he complained, and swiftly arranged for his brother, Grant, to ring at the vital moment to call him away for an emergency.

You can see Phil's point. This is therapy country - that world of scatter cushions, futons and Bodyshop smells, where counsellors in converted lofts heal mental anguish and aromatherapists ease physical pain. All of which makes it foreign territory for most men.

It's hardly surprising then - stripped at the door of our shoes - that we size each other up cautiously. This isn't just any old meeting. Typically at NCT classes, people discover not only the gory details of childbirth. They also seek like-minded couples upon whom they will rely intimately for support, wondering perhaps, if they would trust them with their little treasure.

It's amazing how old we all are. Why have such apparently competent people taken so long to bear a child? Barely anyone is the right side of 30: several, including myself, are heading for 40.

The woman gets plenty of warning, that is nature's way. But this expectant father's eyes are only just being opened to the pains and pleasures of life about to be transformed

How will such ancient specimens, young when the Bay City Rollers were big and already set in our ways, adapt to a tiny baby? We sit cross-legged, and learn to breathe deep in our bellies - "like babies do, but we forget as we grow older", says the instructor. The women's tummies, filled with kicking foetuses, rise and fall.

Would the men, I wonder, do the pencil routine in the delivery suite as our partners roar obscenities to relieve the pain? Apparently not. These playful indignities, we are told, are all about learning to control the muscles down below, a vital skill to prevent prolapse and incontinence after pregnancy. Such exercises, our instructor reassures the men, could also prove handy in later life with the onset of prostate problems.

I'm still a little shocked from this first session. It wasn't the fooling around pretending to be a cow with a handwriting problem, or even the humming. The shock came from a sudden realisation: "Oh Christ, this is going to be very messy, pretty frightening and I don't really know the first thing about what I should do."

The crucial moment was the "birth atlas" unfolded halfway through the class, showing pictures of a baby gradually inching its way down the birth canal, its head squashed and elongated. And there are those throwaway lines about how labour can last anything from three to 48 hours. 48 hours! All this produced a now familiar stunned feeling that I get after each new stage in the pregnancy, each visit to the doctors. The

JACK
O'SULLIVAN

In another life

But I've been questioning him lately about his time as GP. He had, he revealed to my great surprise, delivered hundreds of babies at home in the days when a hospital birth, especially for second and third babies, was rare. Stumbling my way through the mechanics of this single birth, I just think "Wow."

But at the NCT, the men hang back, dutifully reticent. "I'm just dying to play with it," says one expectant dad. We're not as knowledgeable as the women, who have read all the books, but we want to learn. So far, we've largely been ignored by the maternity services. "They don't talk to me, so I've stopped talking to them," says one.

Nevertheless, we're doing our bit. For months we have been supporting our partners, cooking and doing housework when they were sick. Now, as they become more immobile, shopping is out because the bags are too heavy. The women are growing more fired each day.

Many of those jobs around the home that need doing before the baby is born - painting and decorating the nursery - are beyond them. Men realise early on that it's a myth to imagine being a father starts with birth because the child indirectly makes demands on the father by causing the needs of the mother. One of us speaks of getting into training for sleepless nights because his pregnant partner is already awake a lot due to discomfort.

It's great to talk - the partners of pregnant women don't often get together. Men in my office have had babies lately but I didn't even realise they had gone on paternity leave until a message flashed up on my screen declaring that so and so is now proud father of little Horatio or Harriet.

At the NCT, we are tentative. We chat about work and the difficulties of combining it with fatherhood. "Your attitude changes with pregnancy," says one, to general nods. "You're more worried about your job because you need it to support the family. But at the same time you're not so interested in doing it anymore." Discussion moves to the case this week of a man sacked, after 10 years' employment, for taking the day off for his baby's birth. "I'm doing my best. But I'm not sure I'll be there," says one man.

Will we, I wonder, get on to the difficult stuff that no one talks about once we get to know each other better. I'd like to talk, for example, about how couples plan to handle their income if the woman is not going back to work. Perhaps, most important, about what sort of fathers we all hope to be. Maybe we will with time. Who knows? We might even end up hugging.

aftermath (??) is general discombobulation, and a restless night's sleep.

The best bit is the talking. There are hints of the fears that some have experienced: of miscarriage, of it all going wrong. When the killings of the schoolchildren took place at Dunblane, I wondered had it been even worse for the parents because they may have relaxed, because they may have begun to believe that their children were safe, having survived pregnancy, birth and the early-childhood illnesses.

The women lead the conversation, swapping stories about which hospital is best, which midwives are most attentive, how to avoid some units that seem to look like a "torture chamber". What exactly is a "domino delivery", I wonder, amid thoughts of little babies emerging covered in white dots. But the more personal stuff is left unsaid. It's too soon. We don't talk, for example, about who has actually bought their first baby goods. How can you buy a bag of nappies which might, if something goes wrong, never serve any purpose except to haunt you?

It's not easy to explain how the prospect of becoming a parent changes you. But for the first time, I feel properly grown-up. The angry child, still lashing out at my own father, is becoming more sympathetic and understanding. Now 75, with his career some way behind him, my father's life has at times seemed very distant from mine.

The waves crashed down and I pretended I was Deborah Kerr in 'From Here to Eternity'

I met some very rude people during my five days on the Caribbean beach and two days travelling the airports of the world. First, there's the housekeeper who scolds me for getting sand in my room. Now, I'm not going to ask her to call me "Madam" and I feel bad that she has to clean my room, but if I want to get sand on the floor, I bloody will. I'm staying in a hut on a beach, for Lord's sake.

At JFK, they really hate me. "We are called FLIGHT ATTENDANTS, not air stewardesses." It seems that I have deeply offended the staff of American Airlines despite the fact they have kept me waiting for four hours at San Juan International Airport so I miss my connecting flight from JFK to Heathrow, then bumped me off the next two flights home. When we finally board, I agree to swap

seats with a man who wants to sit with his family, and find myself in the last, most dishevelled and bumpy row of the plane.

I explain the situation to the lady, pointing out that since there are so many empty seats in business, and since my treatment had been somewhat lacking, could I not sit there? Her eyes narrow: "Oh, gee, how gallant it was of you to give up your seat for someone, but it's not my problem."

Her sarcasm practically brings tears to my eyes. I'm glad I wasn't at high school with this woman. "Why is it such a big deal? The stewardess back there said it should be okay." And that's when she goes off on her Patrick McGoonan-style "I am not a stewardess, I am a flight attendant" rant.

What a way to spend a Saturday night. Actually, the four hours at San Juan were my favourite part. The Puerto Rican air-

EMMA FORREST



port staff are unstintingly gorgeous and supremely chipper. "Hey, we've got the same birthday," cries the man stamping my passport, "so, happy birthday for next year!" As far as I'm concerned, the Puerto Ricans should rule America. But

as Rita Moreno sang in *West Side Story*: "Nobody knows in America, Puerto Rico's in America."

OK, I met one nice American, if you must know. I was practising my gymnastics on the beach and prancing around like Madonna in the "Cherish" video. Then I had to lie on the shore as the waves crashed down and pretend I was Deborah Kerr in *From Here to Eternity* even though there was no Burt Lancaster around. That's when I heard this booming voice: "Miss, are you OK?" It was a real Southern accent, Alabama or Tennessee. Blushing, my eyes clamped shut, I hissed that I was fine. But he wouldn't go away. "You have sand all over your body." Yup, this is a beach. "But it looks uncomfortable." Well, it's not. Then I shaded my eyes with my hand, looked up

and stone me if it wasn't Burt Lancaster. Well, obviously it wasn't but he looked like him. I rearranged myself into a more ladylike position and we started chatting, although every few minutes Burt would glance over his shoulder.

"What's your name?" Emma. "Oh well Miss, I have to tell you, I am a great fan of Emma Thompson." Where are you from? "Tennessee." [Pause] Oh, I love Tennessee Williams. And he tells me very kindly that Tennessee Williams was from Missouri and I say OK. He tells me he's an environmental geologist and I shriek, "Blimey, an American who does something useful." Finally, I ask him what he's doing here, and he looks over his shoulder again and announces, "I'm on my honeymoon." I say, "Oh, congrats."

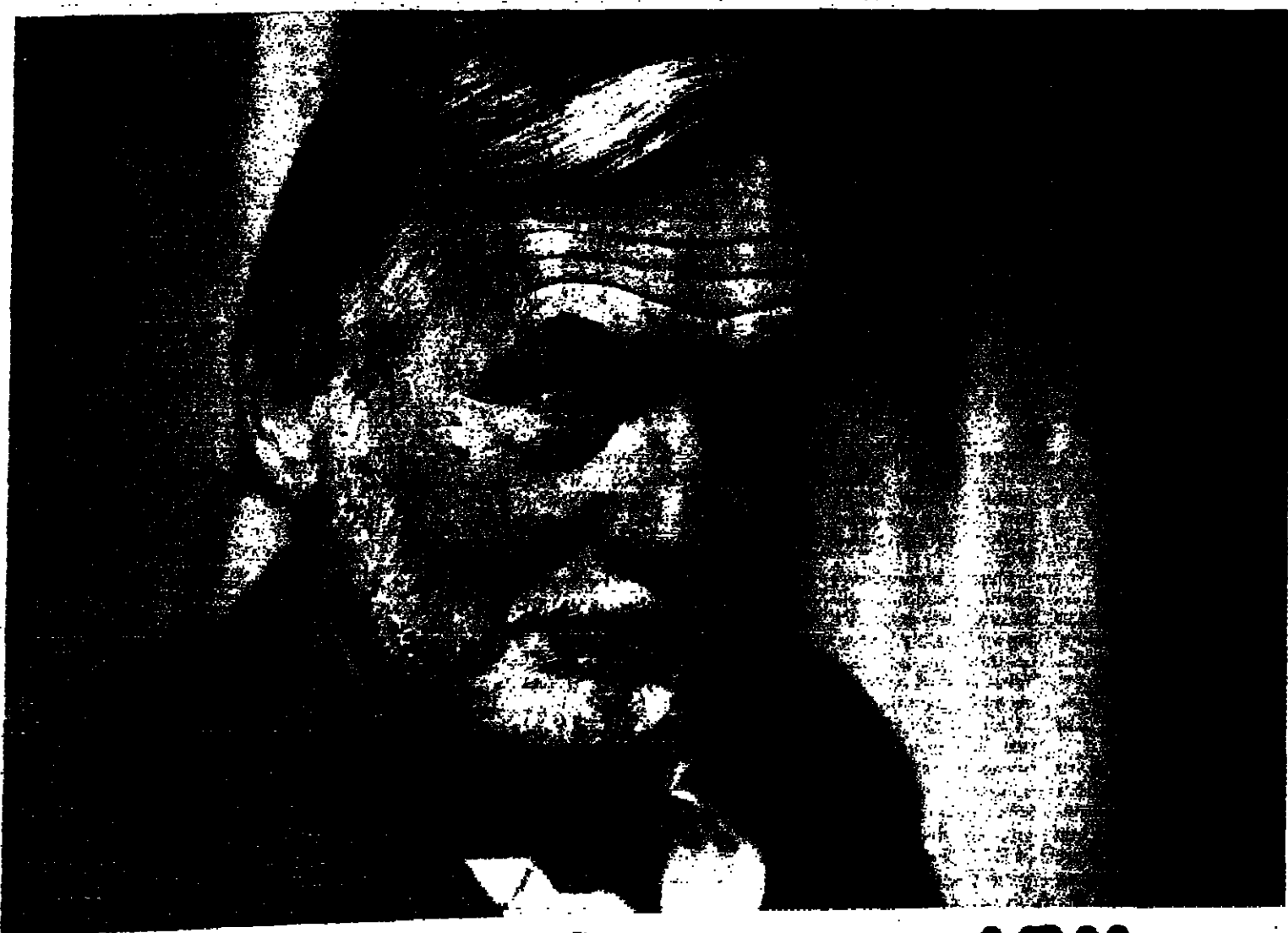
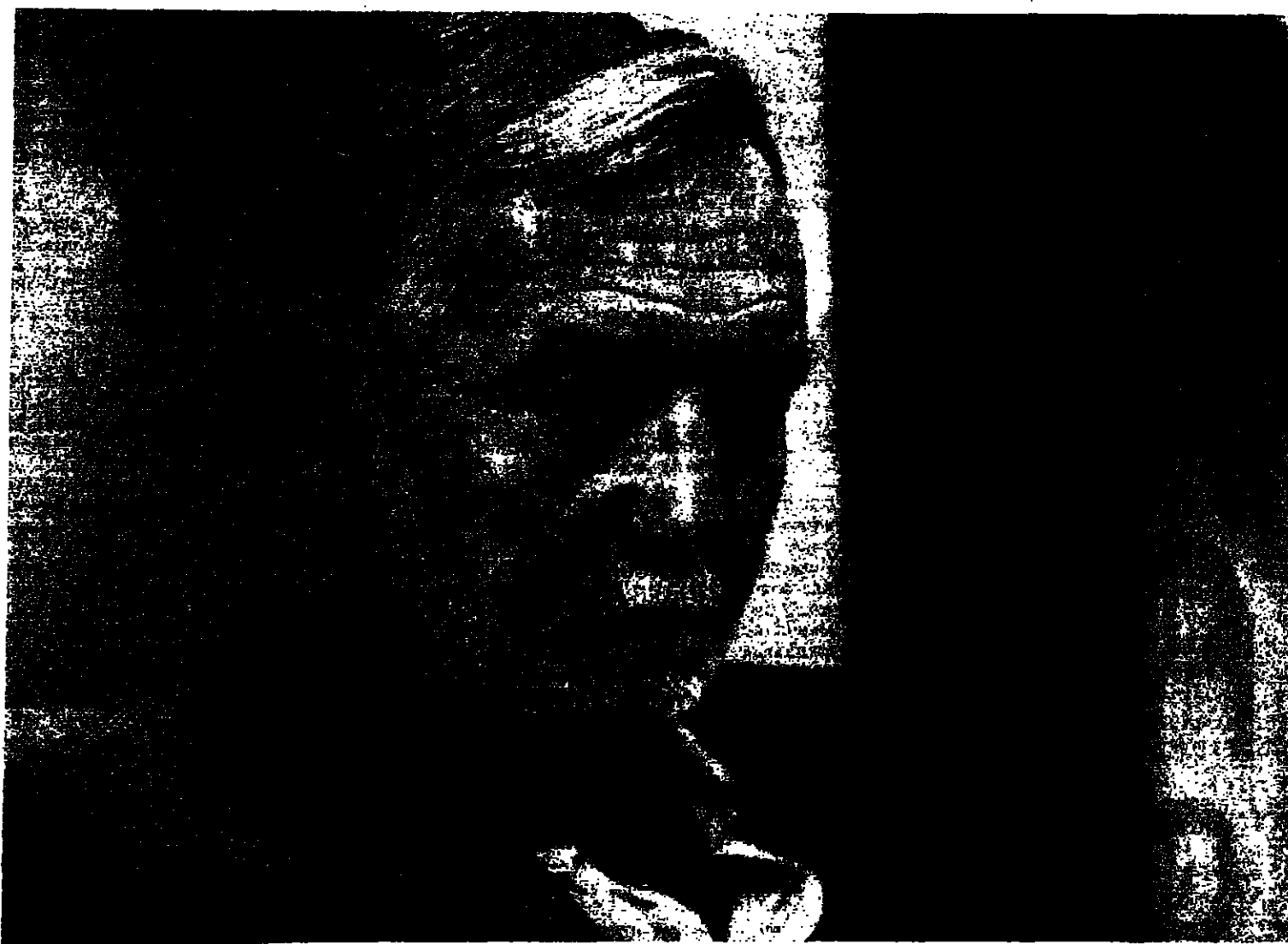
ulations" much too enthusiastically, then go back to my beach hut and sulk.

From then on, Tennessee Burt and his wife are everywhere. He finds me reading on the beach, and he smiles, but I look away because, even though we haven't done anything wrong, I exude a natural guilt like a carefully bottled pheromone. But he comes right up and says, "Susie, this is Emma, we met yesterday. She was covered in sand," as if that makes it above board. Susie, a pretty little brunette, shakes my hand limply. "Emma, this is my wife," and then he starts chuckling. "My wife... it sounds so funny." I glower at him. My travelling companion consoles me. "Look," she reasons, "Maybe he's just a nice man." I consider this and realise she's right. He's just nice. Well, how rude.

Unsworth before and after Hannibal

With his new novel, one of the major events of an autumn rich in fiction, the Booker-Prize winning novelist enters modern times

Interview by Robert Winder. Photographs by Andrew Buurman



But it was about a blocked writer, and what he was failing to write was a book about slavery. He got so bogged down in the appalling nature of the slave trade that he couldn't write the book. And in the process of doing that I became interested myself, and I suppose that in a way *Sacred Hunger* was the book he wanted to write but couldn't.

In stark contrast to the brutal worlds described in these books, Umbria is, at least, sunny. There are clematis flowers and linnets. But Unsworth is quick to explain that the three works are connected – almost to the point of being a trilogy by the theme of justice. “In *Sacred Hunger*, it's about what is lawful in the general consensus of opinion of the time, compared to what is urged by the individual conscience.

“In *Morality Play*, justice is an attribute of power, a poetical weapon, something imposed by the strong upon the weak. And here, in the character of the lawyer, Mancini, it's to do with the difference between justice and law. To Mancini, justice is a question of form or shape, almost an aesthetic concept – not a question of right and wrong, more a question of balance.”

Unsworth talks in a formal manner that seems both charming and old-fashioned. Indeed, if *After Hannibal* is marred, it might be that the modern setting feels, if anything, a touch dated. He freely admits this to be a worry and a danger. He never intended to flee England (“It's been just an accident, really”) but he married a Finnish woman and lived in Helsinki, and then moved to Umbria, Italy, because England looked too pricey. He is the first Unsworth not to have gone down the Durham mines – his father went underground when he was 13 – and he is a devotee (from afar) of the English landscape, “but living in Italy as I do,” he says.

“We're happy there, very happy – maybe too happy. But I do sometimes feel too far from everything. And one's sense of the English language can be a bit affected. I don't read English newspapers and I watch Italian television. The only English I hear is the World Service. So I don't know the language of the street, and while I've never been what you might call street-credible as a writer – I haven't really needed to be – I can feel the remoteness of all that.”

This must be why, in *After Hannibal*, people still “run” cars and call the landscape “heavenly”. And it is noticeable that even in his own speech, Unsworth is unusually formal and elaborate. Even just chatting, he unfurls sentences full of long, subordinate clauses spinning on their commas. On the subject of his being an expatriate, he says: “I think that what I miss, and I don't think now at my age I'll ever acquire it, in Italy or anywhere else, however well I learn Italian – and even there I have a long way to go, is the ability to know immediately, from the merest inflection of a voice, or movements or mannerisms, what kind of people you are dealing with, as you do only with your own compatriots.”

Not many people since Dryden, we might think, have injected so many parentheses into a sentence without losing the thread altogether. But Unsworth has, after all, spent the last few years first in the 18th century (for *Sacred Hunger*) and then in the Middle Ages (*Morality Play*), where people could say things like “forsooth” without anyone laughing. And this tense, deliberate syntax does give a striking steeliness to the conversations in *After Hannibal*.

People choose their words carefully, and so are properly damned when they choose the wrong ones: misquotation plays a key part in the unravelling of one relationship. The emblematic relationship in the book, a long-married English couple, comes to grief when the man is unnecessarily beastly to the neighbouring peasants, whom he has just bested in a local land dispute. His wife is horrified by his unfeeling response, and we know that this will be the end of their affair.

“It was one of the things I thought of when I began the book,” says Unsworth. “The idea that this sort of a revelation can come in a relationship after so many years. It can be delayed for a long time, for 40 years, but it's a killer when it does come. She's been aware of fundamental differences of sensitivity between them, but it doesn't really come into focus until this moment. And it's incurable, a rift like that. You can dislike your husband or wife for a long time without realising that it's dislike you're suffering from, especially if you have a gift for humility, for self-abnegation. And, of course, what provokes it all in the book is the move to Italy. They buy the house to bring them closer together, but it only reveals the rift.”

After Hannibal, in the end, is a rather pessimistic book. It is not ironic that there are snakes in arcadia: what else would you expect? “The real thief of dreams,” the tricky lawyer reflects at the end, “was generally not the one you feared but the one you trusted.” In a very deft way, Unsworth has peeked behind the manners of a 2000-year-old civilisation and found the same fierce rivalries and mean spirals that have been causing trouble in these parts for centuries. “It's such a strong feeling,” he says. “I've had it nowhere else. In Greece, the past is all around you, but there is also this strong sense of loss. But here – I mean, in Umbria – the total humanisation of the landscape is inescapable. Everything is still going on.” At one point in the novel, someone hacks some ivy off a tree by severing the root. But he knows that the scars on the trunk will never fade.

“I went to Liverpool as a writer-in-residence at the University,” he remembers. “I was the first and last one they ever had. I think. Anyway, I'd come from Cambridge, and I was shocked at first by how dilapidated and deprived the city was. And then there was the highly politicised nature of the university, which was rather a new thing for me. And one way or another I got so involved that I didn't write anything for a year, and then I couldn't. It was awful. For 15 months I was blocked, the first time I'd ever had that.”

“I became neurotic – I couldn't sleep. It's a terrible thing because you don't know whether ‘it’ will ever come back, and you don't even know what ‘it’ is. And you lose energy and just feel that you're failing in everything. The only cure is to just do it, however bad, and that's what I did. I wrote a novel called *Sugar and Rum*, which I don't think was a particularly good novel, maybe.

books

Miss Wheeler's feeling for snow

Richard Eyre, whose grandfather went south with Scott, reviews a stunning account of a new polar expedition

When I was a child I dreamed of walking across the unearthly landscape of Antarctica holding the hand of my grandfather. He was the First Lieutenant on Scott's first expedition and, although he died before I was born, his memorabilia possessed my childhood imagination – journals, sledging diaries, maps, letters, drawings, photos, wooden goggles, seal-skin gloves, and a piano which he'd played in the hut on the ice at McMurdo Sound. Sara Wheeler visited the hut 90 years later and found a mummified seal, stacked tins of Huntley and Palmer biscuits, a frozen mutton carcass, and a "stillness like a benediction". I envy her journey as much as I admire it; I have only been there in my dreams.

Most people, like the chicken crossing the road, travel to get to the other side. Travel writers cross the road in order to write a book about it. They live vicariously, are generally disingenuous about their motives and, like explorers, paint themselves into the landscape with a noble, if melancholy, profile – the lone traveller conquering territory and loneliness in a sort of pissing contest for imperturbability. As my grandfather said with unquenchable stoicism in his journals: "What we shall continue to do is to behave like ordinary human beings... with the help of a little tact, a little self-denial, and a cheery face, most of the monotony and discomfort can be overcome."

But then most travellers and most explorers are men, and it's not the least pleasure of Sara Wheeler's *Terra Incognita* to find her confessing that when she was lonely, cold, and ignored by her male companions she burst into tears. This is not a book written by an honorary man.

During a trip to Chile in 1991 Sara Wheeler saw the distant icefields of Antarctica and felt she was "glimpsing the world for the first time" – space, time and territory without owner. The desolate continent became an obsessive object of desire, lodged in her mind's eye as a landscape of metaphor and a spiritual *tabula rasa*. It took her two years to organise her trip, and after countless applications, interviews, conferences and medicals she became the first foreigner to be accepted for the American National Science Foundation's Antarctic

Terra Incognita
by Sara Wheeler
Cape, £18.99

Artists' and Writers' Program. As W-002: Wheeler she became writer in residence at the American base on Ross Island. Less than a mile from the hut where my grandfather spent two ice-bound winters, it was now possible to get served a perfectly decent cappuccino.

Whatever the comforts of improved food and clothing, heating and transport, there remained the immutable brutality of the cold, the wind and the ice and, for Sara Wheeler, the daily invasion of a more or less exclusively male social territory, whose patron saint – Scott – had proved, as the President of the Royal Geographical Society said, that "the manhood of our nation is not dead".

Wheeler travelled in the shadow of these self-deluding myths, accompanied by the ghosts of Scott, Shackleton, Amundsen, and Mawson, haunted by their pain, awed by their endurance. Eventually she arrived by plane at the South Pole, "a cluster of black dots", to find there a 12-foot poster of Elvis, a signpost marked "Graceland" and 130 people. She quotes Thomas Pynchon, perhaps for solace: "It is not what I saw or believed I saw that in the end is important. It is what I thought."

Whether she is describing the apotheosis of tourism or the heroic folly of generations of explorers she writes with a consistent wry wit: "So often it is the landscapes most inimical to life that are the most seductive. In this respect they are like boyfriends." She seamlessly weaves the narrative of her Antarctic journey with the history of the exploration of the continent. I have read many accounts of polar exploration, but never one which so touchingly describes its emotional topography, and the peculiar resonance for the British of the conquest of a Never-Never-land where nothing ever decays except souls.

Wheeler is detached from her subject, but never lacks empathy, compassion or generosity for people whose values, background and



The conquest of a Never-Never-land where nothing decays except souls: iceberg landscape, Antarctica

Photo: B&C Alexander

gender were the polar opposite of hers. She says of Apsley Cherry-Garrard, the luminously elegant chronicler of Scott's last expedition: "His prose is divine, its mournful echoing cadences reminiscent of a great badly-lit railway station where people are saying goodbye." It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say the same thing of her writing.

"You wait. Everyone has an Antarctic," is the book's epigraph. What her Antarctic is we never discover, and perhaps it is churlish to want to know more about her emotional wasteland: "I had been living near the edge," she says. But in a book which is marinated in the psychology of loneliness and suffering, which is larded with

inquiry into the power of the unknown over the human mind, insists that cold places are conducive to spiritual awareness and which affirms the existence of God, it is hard not to want to know what the author is escaping from, and even if it is prurient, not to feel somehow short-changed by hints of too much drink and too little love.

Perhaps she was impelled by nothing more than the desire to go on a sentimental journey, to escape the nine-to-five-ness of life, and seek a loss of self and a new identity. At the end of her journey she spent the night with her head on Scott's pillow on the bunk in the hut from which he left on his last voyage for the Pole. She

identifies with a man who she regards as her hero, however vain, schoolboyish, and foolhardy, and if there is anything that clouds her candour, it is only the mask of romanticism: "It was the great thrill of my life... It had allowed me to believe in paradise, and that, surely, is a gift beyond price."

I find it difficult to resist a book about exploration which ends with a recipe for Bread and Butter Pudding (Antarctic Version), and although I'm genetically indentured to be curious about the Antarctic, unlike Sara Wheeler I have done nothing about it: you admire what you cannot do yourself. What she has done could not be done better.

Making a bit of a hash of things

Howard Marks had 43 aliases, smoked 20 joints a day, and shifted 100 tons of cannabis in his time. Duncan Fallowell finds an old-fashioned criminal beneath the disguises

Here is a taste of the text, chosen because it is what most of the book is like. "Flash put me through. Ernie had been worried and was glad I called. There was more money for me to pick up in Hong Kong. Bill was still at the Mandarin. He had \$250,000 ready for me. Richard Shurman's son Steve was in the Peninsula Hotel. He was holding about \$150,000. Bruce Aiken was holding about the same amount in his office in Edinburgh Towers. Steve had the full..." etc.

At first this autobiography is riveting for the breathless candour with which Mr Marks exposes the mechanics of dope dealing: who was doing what with whom. M16, the CIA, the DEA, the IRA, the Mafia, numerous friends, P.J. Proby and the late Lord Moyinhan all fly past at breakneck speed. Money splatters everywhere.

Occasionally something unusual bobs up – there is a fascinating paragraph, for example, on how to smell-proof hashish for transit. And there are a number of wonderful moments. A particularly satisfying one – because it is a wide-spread fantasy – takes place as Mr and Mrs Marks are travelling home via Switzerland during one of their less well-off periods. They are sitting outside a café in some resort when Mrs Marks suddenly points across the square to a bank and exclaims "Howard, I'm sure I opened an account there." Half an hour later she emerges with £20,000.

The book is certainly the fruit of much experience and is not without humour, intelligence ("One of the keys to business success is to pre-

Mr Nice
by Howard Marks
Secker, £16.99

tend to be doing what one ultimately wants to do") and generosity (he is especially kind to underdogs and minorities). But as hundreds of pages turn over in a blur of names, hotels, airports, bars and suitcases of cash, like an endless global rock tour from the secretary's point of view, it begins to seem that a life of non-stop adventure becomes meaningless even more rapidly than other forms of existence. And, in a technical sense, the book is curiously at odds with itself: an air of veracity is well established by the welter of specific information, yet undermined by reams of embarrassing dialogue.

Then on page 346, Howard answers the phone and we read: "Tom and I had devised a code. If he began his telephone conversation with the words 'how things are', then I should infer that extreme danger was imminent. I went over his conversation in my mind. I couldn't remember how he'd started."

At which point one must ask oneself – if his memory fails over a few seconds, how on earth can he recall these extraordinarily labyrinthine transactions between London, Hong Kong, Manila, Karachi and Bangkok over a period of 20 years? Criminals do not keep meticulous diaries of their movements, and as for cannabis,



Rogue's Gallery: Four faces of Howard Marks

whatever it might do for the spirit, it does appalling things to the memory (Marks usually smoked 20 joints a day). Nowhere are we told where all this very precise material is coming from.

If Mr Nice were on television it could be

called a "drama documentary", a form which allows many liberties. And obviously the dialogue is contrived. Which still leaves a staggering amount of circumstantial detail unaccounted for. So I rang an ex-dealer and asked his opinion and he said that, firstly, I should remember that Howard's forte was the confidence trick. I said that's true of all professional criminals and he said yes but Howard was particularly strong on plausibility and this had enabled him to slip out of many tight corners. Secondly, said my friend, major dope dealers are generally known to the authorities – the task is to secure a conviction. So many of Howard's movements will have been logged, especially by the Drug Enforcement Agency in the USA – where the Freedom of Information Act allows access.

To which I must make an important addition: with this book we are in a conspiratorial society, that is, in the realm of flexi-truth, and in such societies nobody knows what's really going on most of the time, and very often the more you investigate, the less certain you become (try living in Russia for a month to discover the truth of this). In other words, Mr Marks's version is as true as anyone else's.

Another matter which rankled was the plentiful naming of names. Hundreds of them. How many did he change? Of the few known to me personally, none was contacted for a waiver. When, after jumping through the hoops of 43 aliases, Marks underwent the final big bust, he was extradited to the USA and imprisoned for

seven years. The authorities were going for 40 and offered a plea bargain. Marks refused, saying he was no snitch. But is not the whole book a betrayal of this confidential subculture? For example, he describes in detail his involvement with the so-called IRA dope dealer, Jim McCann. He still hasn't got a dope conviction. For Marks, the book is not only a commercial opportunity but also part of a cleaning and rebirth, but for his many colleagues it could well be an unwelcome exhumation.

Is he nice? He says he never dealt anything harder than cannabis and this is his social defence. Beginning with the help of Pakistani, Lebanese and Afghan diplomats, bringing hashish to their embassies in Europe, Marks was instrumental in smuggling about 100 tons of the stuff by the end of his career. He discovered in prison that, compared to the achievements of some there, this was a modest total. The modern-day hero is an outlaw – also sexually promiscuous and often very violent. Despite having been to Balliol College, Oxford, Marks scores well only in the first of these, so there is something old-fashioned about his career too, a relic from an era when you could go a long way by just being loose and friendly.

Presumably dope dealing, like everything else, has become a lot more tight-fisted since then. The book is illustrated mostly with photographs of the wife and kids and fellow-criminals in Terre Haute Penitentiary – very Sicilian that.

Smooth operator

Geoff Dyer fails to fall for the sweet talk of a seductive psychoanalyst

For Albert Camus in 1942 there was "but one truly serious philosophical problem and that is suicide." Flirting – which is what, along with kissing, tickling and being bored, he is best known for – with this stark existential admonition, Adam Phillips in 1996 declares that "for some of us – perhaps the fortunate, or at least the affluent – monogamy is the only serious philosophical question." This book is, therefore, an enquiry into the word "we" – and into how deftly a coat of irony must be applied to stop us taking that "serious" too seriously.

That "enquiry" consists of 121 aphorisms, or about 150 paragraphs. If this seriously skimpy offering bears the implicit sub-title "A Couple's Discourse" that echo reminds us that Roland Barthes' masterful array of fragments was not only a brilliant book but a

substantial one, too. It's not, as they say, a question of length but of whether a work has achieved a form adequate to the theme addressed – and the answer to that depends on whether we are perusing that theme or whether we are perusing that the book is really about what its title declares ("the content," Phillips warns at one point, "is often a smoke-screen"). Is monogamy really the theme of this book? Perhaps not. In fact, despite their ostensible variety of concerns, all of Phillips's books orbit a topic he has not addressed directly in any of them: seduction.

The quotes on the back of these books have considerable pulling power, the titles are alluring, the author's considerable erudition is turned down low – but you can never quite give yourself to them. Phillips is too smooth an operator, you never enter into a relationship

Monogamy
by Adam Phillips
Faber, £6.99

with his books the way you do with certain writers. You flirt with reading them. This is why *Monogamy* is so revealing. The ostensible examination of the relations between couples between its covers turns out to be an analogue of the relationship between its writer and reader.

Think of those times when you are so involved with a particular writer that for however brief a period – even just a couple of tube stops – you have time for him or her alone. In the case of Phillips I am struck by the impossibility of remaining

even briefly faithful to him. In the case of this book I often found myself unable to finish the tiny chunks of text that seemed designed expressly for readers with attention deficit syndrome. Why?

Phillips himself offers a clue. When reading about monogamy, he counsels, we might be better off if, instead of asking whether "the author is right," we concentrate on the "question of tone." What is most seductive about his psychoanalytic essays is, precisely, his tone of patient reasonableness. It may have been logical to pare down his already uncluttered style into bleached pages of aphorisms but Phillips's essential reasonableness works against this. The great aphorists – one thinks immediately of E.M. Cioran – are unreasonable: it is an unreasonable form. With none of the

automatic compulsion of progressive exposition to rely on, the writer has to make sure that the reader is button-holed with a storm of ideas.

We often mark passages in books we read. In works of fiction a pencilled tick every 70 pages is enough to keep us satisfied. Aphorists need to aim for the almost impenetrable density of marginal approval – or rebuke – that we grant Nietzsche or Cioran. They have to detain us, forcibly, and this is contrary to Phillips's style as analyst-writer. "Partner, spouse, wife, husband, co-habitee. The problem of monogamy is that we have never found the words for it."

You might not feel too short-changed if that fell out of a Faber Christmas Cracker but in its current context of proud textual isolation it seems curiously similar to the white page that sur-

rounds it: i.e. empty. Of course, there are plenty of smart observations ("This is what makes relationships last: the disillusionment that is the key to a lifelong romance") but often what we get is the *tone* ("contradiction is the foreplay of logicians") or syntax ("In our exotic lives we... This is why...") of cleverness rather than its substance.

Likewise, much of the fizz of Phillips's thought turns out to be released by relatively few rhetorical devices, specifically the epigrammatic inversion or casual turn-around: "This is why no one ever really separates from anybody. And also, of course, why people are never quite together."

What's happened, in a nutshell, is that the author has seduced himself. The resulting performance is more appealing to voyeurs than readers.

Into the whirlwind with Sam, Muriel, Redmond and Annie

The publishers' autumn lists are crammed with delights. John Walsh, Literary Editor, makes a personal selection

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to the eye of the publishing storm. The beginning of September traditionally marks the official moment when the gentle drizzle of late spring and the paperback squalls of midsummer give way to the most tremendous show of weather, the spouts and hurricanes of autumn, as the nation's publishing houses bring out their best and biggest titles in the run-up, first to the Booker Prize and then to Christmas. For literary editors, it's the time when scores of thousands of books seem to arrive in every post, and perch malevolently on every available surface and the *Independent* books cupboard looks like a scene from *Twister*. So what should you be looking out for?

Biography, the British public's favourite non-fiction category, is strongly represented this autumn. Scandal-hounds will flock to Roger Lewis's biography of *Laurence Olivier* (Century, £25) to see if the great actor gets the same treatment as Peter Sellers received at the hands of Lewis's hyperactive imagination. Art completists will be relieved to see that John Richardson's slow, magisterial life of Picasso has successfully reached Volume II (Cape, £30), taking the story all the way to 1917 (only another 56 years to go). Beatles sentimentalists will revel in the authorised Paul McCartney biography, *Many Years From Now* (Secker, £17.99) by Barry Miles, whose credentials as former biographer of Allen Ginsberg is a kind of non-biography guarantee. Music fans of a gentler stripe will lap up *A Genius in the Family* (Heinemann, £16.99), Piers and Hilary Du Pre's tender account of life with Jacqueline, the brilliant cellist who died of multiple sclerosis.

For people who still take literature seriously, however, the hot subject of



The lions of autumn: Christopher Isherwood, Phil Noy, E Anne Proulx and Jacqueline du Pré

the autumn is Samuel Beckett, who died five years ago, aged 85, leaving a legacy of "stains upon the silence" and a certain degree of bafflement about his private life. Mortifyingly shy of interviews during his life, he agreed at its end to talk to his friend James Knowlson, director of the Beckett Archive at Reading University. The result is the enormously detailed and wholly unmissable *Damned to Fame: the life of Samuel Beckett* (Bloomsbury, £25); it's followed hotfoot by Anthony Cronin's rival life, *The Last Modernist* (HarperCollins, £20). Elsewhere on the Parnassian heights, Virginia Woolf fans are already squabbling about whether Hermione Lee's new life of the clairaudient queen of the Hogarth Press (Chatto, £20) is better, shrewder or more sympathetic than Quentin Bell's biography from 1972. One of the autumn's most massive undertakings is

Christopher Isherwood's *American diaries*, over 1,000 pages of waspish observation of Californian mores from the beginnings of war to the Sixties, collected under the title *The Emigre* (Methuen, £25). Susanna Clapp's memoir of her friend, *A Portrait of Bruce Chatwin* (Cape, £14.99) is the first of three promised quasi-biographies of the nomadic polymath. Sir Alec Guinness will publish *My Name Escapes Me* (Hamish Hamilton £17), his "diary of a retiring actor" alongside *Blessings in Disguise* (H Hamilton £18), an updating of his theatrical memories. But for sheer curiosity value, I predict a rush of punters anxious to get their hands on *Full Disclosure* (Macmillan, £16.99), Andrew Neil's record of his years at the *Sunday Times*. They were the years when everything fell – the Berlin Wall, the Soviet Union, Mrs Thatcher, the Stock Market, house

prices, Pamela Bordes's underwear – and Neil was around to monitor it all with his gruff, but oddly likeable, sod-the-establishment insouciance.

A superior autumn for fiction kicks off with the rare sighting of a Muriel Spark novel, *Reality and Dreams* (Constable, £14.95) and the deep joy of a major work from Margaret Atwood who has been saddled with the insultingly limited sobriquet of "the world's best female novelist": *Alias Grace* (Bloomsbury £15.99) is a disturbingly intense unloving of the mind of an Irish servant girl who murdered her employer in 1843. Colm Tóibín's *The Story of the Night* (Picador, £16.99) is one of the season's most talked-about novels, from the strikingly talented author of *The South* and *The Heather Blazing*. The author of the Pulitzer-winning *The Shipping News*, E Anne Proulx, is back with a major work

called *Accordion Crimes* (Fourth Estate, £16.99), which follows the various owners of the titular squeeze-box (rather in the spirit of *The Yellow Rolls-Royce*) and thereby evokes the spirit of a nation struggling to be born.

Clive James's latest, *The Silver Castle* (Cape, £14) is a satire on the pretensions of the Indian "Bollywood" film industry (since his last, *Brunn Brun*, was a jocular look at a young Japanese innocent in London, one must assume he's trying to annoy the world's major civilisations, one by one) and Mario (The Godfather) Puzo makes a late attempt to clamber back into the limelight in *The Last Don* (Heinemann, £15.99). New thrillers from Scott Turow (*The Laws of our Fathers*, Viking, £16), Philip Kerr (*Esau*, Chatto, £15.99), Elmore Leonard (*Out of Sight*, Viking £16) and Colin Dexter (*Death is Now My Neighbour*, Macmillan £15.99) will

delight aficionados, while I cannot wait to read a new collection from the finest short story writer of the century (and that's not excluding Joyce) – William Trevor's *After Rain* (Viking £16) is out in October.

The most popular subject for large-scale historical analysis is Europe, its shifting contours, wars and problematic "harmonisation" comprehensively explored in Norman Davies's vast, Napoleonically ambitious study *Europe: A History* (Oxford, £30) and, at half the length but with no less penetration, by Prof J M Roberts in *A History of Europe* (Helicon, £25). Prof Roberts is, of course, the distinguished author of *A History of the World*; it is interesting to see him narrowing his academic focus like this.

What else? The travel book of the autumn will be Redmond O'Hanlon's *Congo Journey* (Hamish Hamilton, £18), his long-awaited (ie ludicrously late-arriving) follow-up to *Into the Heart of Borneo* and *In Trouble Again*, informed by his extraordinary combination of bear-like intrepidity, twinkly humour and vertiginous erudition. Christopher Silvester's *The Literary Companion to Parliament* (Sinclair Stevenson, £20) will be the book most reviewed by Roy Hattersley, Roy Jenkins, Anthony Howard, Matthew Parris et al. The most dementedly talented cartoonist of his generation, Martin Rowson, brings out his wholly crazoid interpretation of *Tristram Shandy* (Picador £15) in October. And at the time of writing, the much-discussed *success de scandale* of the autumn, Amanda Craig's *A Vicious Circle*, due in November, has been suspended, pending lawyers' enquiries into some flimsily disguised portraits of real people. For the moment, you can't read this shocking exposure of corrupt London literary life. Why it's almost as if we arranged for it to disappear...

For those with Beryl on the sea

Peter Parker reviews an exhilarating new novel about the Titanic disaster

Although Edward VII died in 1910, the age to which he lent his name rolled on in its stately, opulent way for another few years, before foundering in the trenches of the First World War. Even before 1914 there had been intimations of catastrophe, however – notably in the dark year of 1912. In April the supposedly unsinkable *R.M.S. Titanic* went down on her maiden voyage with the loss of some 1500 lives, and in November came the news that Captain Scott and his companions had died in their attempt to conquer the South Pole. The previous year J.M. Barrie had published his own novella of *Peter Pan*, in which Wendy, on learning that the Lost Boys are going to be made to walk the plank, tells them: "I feel I have a message to you from your real mothers, and it is this: 'We hope our sons will die like English gentlemen'." This hope was echoed and fulfilled both by male passengers on the *Titanic*, who stood aside as women and children were helped into the lifeboats and by the doomed Scott, scribbling his final messages to civilisation.

Other last words give Beryl Bainbridge the title for her extraordinary new novel, which follows *The Birthday Boys* (about Scott) and *An Awfully*

Every Man For Himself
by Beryl Bainbridge
Duckworth, £14.99

Big Adventure (about Peter Pan) in being intimately concerned with death, and the death of innocence in particular. The *Titanic* captain's widely reported farewell to his crew was: "You have done your duty, boys. Now every man for himself." As in *The Birthday Boys*, Bainbridge has used real characters and events and made of them something that is both a psychologically convincing recreation and a wholly new and highly individual work of art.

The *Titanic* sets out on Bainbridge's fatal journey with its full complement of real people – New York plutocrats, representatives of the White Star Line, W.T. Stead and other celebrities of the day – but the author has also smuggled aboard a number of characters whose names do not appear on history's passenger list. It is a measure of Bainbridge's skill that one needs to consult that list in order to work out who is invented



Bainbridge: exhilarating panache

and who merely reanimated. Her narrator is a young American called Morgan, an obscure (and fictional) nephew of J. Pierpont Morgan, owner of the White Star shipping line. Although travelling first class, Morgan had worked in a lowly capacity in the design offices of the ship's builders. Family connections have made him an intimate of a group of young English and American aristocrats, also on board, and he becomes

involved with a number of rather more mysterious individuals: a dress designer from Manchester, a singer, an insolent young seaman from Liverpool and a man with a scarred lip, called simply Scurra. It is this last character, first introduced in a brief prologue, who carries most weight in the novel.

A famous scene in Noël Coward's *Cavalcade*, in which a honeymoon couple on the promenade deck of a liner have been contentedly chattering away about life, death and destiny, ends when the woman removes her cloak from a rail, thus uncovering a lifebelt bearing the legend *R.M.S. Titanic*. Coward's *coup de théâtre* seems crude now, but contemporary accounts of the voyage are studded with remarks and incidents which acquired a hideous irony in the wake of the disaster. Bainbridge's narrative sensibly embraces hindsight rather than attempting to avoid it; her story is, after all, told in retrospect by a survivor. Some of the irony is straightforward, but elsewhere it is more complicated. Morgan's recollections of blasting away at red squirrels in the company of two directors of the shipping line, for example, brings to mind another apparently thriving

species shortly to vanish: the leisured class thronging the upper deck. The wonderful opening sentence of Morgan's reminiscences shows, with Bainbridge's customary economy of means, the sudden, eruption of death into a season more usually associated with life: "At half past four on the afternoon of 8th April 1912 – the weather was mild and hyacinths bloomed in window boxes – a stranger chose to die in my arms." The later significance of this event, we discover, is carefully signalled with that seemingly testy "chose".

Bainbridge's description of the unfolding disaster – at once frightening and funny – is done with a series of small, deft touches: stairs which look perfectly level, but which unbalance someone descending them; male passengers, called up from their warm berths onto the cold deck, "with their naked throats and ankles the colour of lard"; a woman unrecognisable because "she had creamed her face for sleep and her eyebrows had disappeared". The apparent simplicity of this short, beautifully written book should mislead no one. Here is a writer who knows precisely what she is doing and who does it with unemphatic but exhilarating panache.

How not to make an Impac

It's lucky David Malouf isn't trying to earn a living as a comedian, says Christopher Hawtree

The Conversations at Curlow Creek
by David Malouf
Chatto, £14.99

Only in *Johnny and Child's Play* was there any drive. One was an account of two oddly-matched adolescent friends and the other preparations for an assassination, but even these prove insubstantial. *Child's Play* is distinctly inferior to *The Day of the Jackal*, a novel whose author has evidently looked at the world around him. Avowed poeticism need not lose a grasp upon reality, but *The Conversations at Curlow Creek* takes place in no world, past or present. It goes beyond rumination to vapouring. One paragraph concerns an old Irishman who has built a series of fountains "that struck up as you approached, through a clockwork mechanism, a set of minarets and Turkish marches, and when you got close enough shot a jet of water in your face."

This is not precisely engineered prose (do visitors themselves go through the clockwork mechanism?), but one gets the point. Then comes the one-word paragraph: "Clockwork." What is going on here?

Why didn't he simply continue with the next, one-sentence paragraph? Even this – "Adair loved the part that clocks played in the life of the Park" – would have been more effective if run into the next one, a serviceable account of these timepieces. On and on it goes.

Rhetorical questions tumble pell-mell, interrupted only by such lumbering observations as "certain spaces, with their shadows and secreted, seem inevitably associated in our minds with particular forms of feeling, so much so that we think of them as their perfect counterpart; if they were different, if the light that filled them had a different quality, or fell at a different angle, what we feel would be different; or so it seems."

This sentiment, cod-Marcel rather than genuine Adair, could occur anywhere in Malouf's novels which, whatever their setting in time and place, never leap free of their creator's mind. Turned in on himself, Malouf unblushingly offers this on behalf of the hapless Adair: "more insistent than his love of justice, or his will to achieve it, was the need to relieve himself savagely of the vision of that girl's thighs, whose light was so much more dazzling than the light off any page, and the darkness between them so close to a form of darkness in himself that he clung to it and would not relinquish." Not only is this the worst sentence in any seriously-intended novel since the war, but one must question Malouf's much-vaunted perspicacity. Strictly for reasons of literary justice, six Virginia-like women recently agreed to have this novel tested against their thighs. None of these, even the healthy-eaters, outshone the paper – and 170 years ago, it would have been rather brighter than that foisted on us by publishers nowadays.

He'll be wearing white pyjamas

Philippa Gregory enjoys an exciting tale of sexy cultists and opulent jewels

Oyster
by Janette Turner Hospital
Virago Press, £14.99

secret. In Maroo, the telephone lines are controlled, all letters disappear into a tin box and are never sent, the outsiders who are drawn into working the reef by Oyster are brainwashed into becoming his slaves, living like troglodytes in the disused mine shafts, mining for opals all day, dizzied by wild prophetic religious services all night. Oyster selects women to service his desires and the novel hovers perilously close to comic melodrama when he uncovers his "sceptre of power". Visitors hoping to find their children among the reef-working zombies have fatal accidents. Everyone in the town is bought by the priceless opals, and seduced by the powerful combination of millennial fear and political paranoia.

It's persuasively written; but such stories have been done many times before and it is a disappointment that an author such as Turner Hospital could go no further with this richly fertile notion than a sexy cult leader in white pyjamas and a reef full of opals.

What she does superbly, is the setting of Outer Maroo. You can almost smell the stink of the heat which settles over the little town, you can almost taste the longing for rain after years of drought. The tiny shop, the bar, the church, are vividly mapped. The sense of distance, of miles of outback and uncharted land is powerfully evoked. The characters are idiosyncratic and persuasively written, from Mercy Givens herself to the circle of people around her – her missing teacher Miss Susan Rover, her mother sinking into shock and depression and her defeated father. Her recollection of Miss Rover's lessons are what keep Mercy going, and the reader will enjoy them too. Miss Rover believes that colonial readers and writers will always have the edge over those from the metropolitan centre for only they can learn two world views: from the colonial power looking down, and from the colonised country looking up. Thus the underdog always knows more: a good principle for a revolutionary.

Oyster is a welcome development by Turner Hospital whose previous books have been obscure, if not almost unreadable. This one, with its evocative sense of place and exciting plot should command a wider readership for an author of powerful literary gifts.

NEXT WEEK

New novels for Autumn from: Margaret Atwood, Stephen Fry, JG Ballard, Colin Thubron, Alice Thomas Ellis and Charlotte Cory

Drink and be miserable

Edward Pearce is not amused by a po-faced history of the bottle and its evils

What does one make of the publishers of a book whose index lists "Stalin, Joseph 168-203" although the chapter on Stalin only runs from page 155 to 187? The index has clearly been compiled from a typescript numbered differently from the printed pages and then not even looked at, never mind checked. Even by current slatternly standards of book production, this is grim. But there is something depressing about this whole book. James Graham has a thesis: that alcohol is a bad thing, leading to alcoholism, which is a worse thing – like Calvin Coolidge's preacher, he is against it.

He is right of course. Alcoholism wrecks lives directly and, when booze rules the driving wheel or the national helm, injures the innocent bystanders too. But a more thoughtful case against drink might have been made than these successive capsules of information about the murderers, novelists, dictators and other top people who have been on the Most-to-meths trail.

Trapped once in a hotel bedroom in Rockford, Illinois and switching from channel to channel, I became the victim of a serial rant from three separate, more or less distinguishable evangelists – too-clean, too-neat men who punctuated their obstinate discourse with "Zachariah: Chapter eight, verse 21" and "Judges: Chapter six, verse 27". James Graham is like that. His obsession with the evils of alcoholism allows him no perspective, no reservations, no nuances, no proper debate on his subject. He keeps up his assault in a monotone, or at any rate within the limits of C Major and E flat. Frankly, I wanted to switch channels.

The publishers speak of the author's "meticulous research" and say that he "spent 20 years writing *The Secret History of Alcoholism*". Meticulously, Graham describes Henry VIII as "executioner of four wives" before listing the two he did execute.

Graham has an American faith in the power of lists and references: "Donald W. Goodwin MD, in *Alcohol and the Writer* (Andrews and McMeel, 1988), listed dead American writers who were 'considered alcoholic by contemporaries or biographers or who drank enough to get the reputation of being alcoholic' ... And here", Graham goes on, "is his list: Edgar Allan Poe, Ambrose Bierce, Theodore Dreiser ..." ending 45 names later with Raymond Chandler. To that roll-call should be added "almost every writer

The Secret History of Alcohol

By James Graham

Element, £8.99

on the *New Yorker* during the Thirties". That should make us think. After such a pounding, I warned to Edwin Arlington Robinson (blacklisted by Goodwin). Robinson's creation, Miniver Cheever, knew all about thinking and "Thought, and thought and thought about it/ And kept on drinking."

Graham's humourless, styleless pulp drone is the very worst weapon to pit against alcohol – this is a 190-page temperance lecture designed to drive anyone to drink. One's regret at dismissing a man's labours as a comic atrocity is stilled by the way he gleefully catalogues every new discovery, bog-hopping from cracked-up literature to cracked-up literature with horrible greed. The more that can be crammed onto the charge sheet the better: "Truman Capote, son of an alcoholic mother who committed suicide, was himself an alcoholic."

Of course Truman Capote was an alcoholic; so was the mass murderer, Theodore Bundy, who is also to be found in this bowl of brandy-laced muesli. Apart from Stalin, who merits a chapter of his own, Graham is too busy with murder and literature to worry much about politicians.

He can find only three alcoholic US presidents (Pierce, Andrew Johnson and Grant) out of the 40-odd so far, and he keeps clean out of British politics, though we boast a candidate far more consequential than George Brown, had we the nerve to say so. Graham has not included Yeltsin or Galtieri either. And since he wishes to link Alcohol with Evil, he has problems when he comes across a monster who is contemptuous of drink.

Stalin gets that chapter, but what about Hitler the teetotaler? Ah, but Hitler's dad drank, so that's all right. What about Winston Churchill, heroic, eloquent and benign on a staple diet of cognac? What about Grant who, on awful American whiskey, had the moral courage to resign his commission because he thought the Mexican war was wrong? Graham applauds him for giving up drink after the Civil War and living soberly thereafter. Alas, Grant as a drunk won the war. As a President, he was sober and incapable.



Squids in with the pipe-smoking oysters

Pete Davies finds himself in stitches over the eccentricities of rural England

It was the fudge that did it – that, and the image of the man trying to buy a rabbit "with a fiver in one hand, two slices of bread in the other, and drool running down his chin". After the tale of the supernaturally dense Archway Baby, and a wild digression on the staying power of cinder coffee, I could take no more. I fell from my chair to my hands and knees hooting helplessly, so buckled with laughter that my lower back was in pain. The only glimmer of consolation through the blinding haze of mirth was to reflect, between heaving for breath, that at least I wasn't reading this on a bus.

Harry Pearson is funnier than Bill Bryson. *The Far Corner* had more laughs per page than anything ever written about football: now he's written a summer book (on the grounds that this time he wanted to be warm) and it's a prize onion of a tome that'll leave you streaming at the eyes with merriment. Trawling through the sheep fairs and flower shows of the rural North, pausing to salivate over the cake stalls, or to reflect on such zoological marvels as the pipe-smoking oyster and Toby the Learned Pig, Pearson unveils a hidden England

North Country Fair: Travels Among

Racing Pigs and Giant Marrows

by Harry Pearson

Little, Brown, £14.99

ripiely stuffed with arcane history, overflowing idiosyncrasy, and cinnamon doughnuts.

You will learn, for example, how the traditional crafts of Westmorland preserve, *inter alia*, folk memories of the time "when great herds of squid roamed the Pennines, cropping the heather, squirting ink at curlews and filling the night with their plangent mating calls". You will find here revealed the doping scandals of the pigeon-racing world, in which corsone-addled Belgian ringers develop paranoid psychosis and accuse you of following them around. You will meet The Man Who Couldn't Whistle, suffer collateral Tipperware damage, gaze at giant Angeworm rabbits with burrows the size of drift mines, and you will quail with fear before the English male at play in the resort town of Seaburn – "Deliverance dressed in a kiss-me-quick hat."

Indeed, Seaburn was so terrifying that Pearson never did find the annual show of the North-East Budgerigar Society, and had to head off instead to Egton Gooseberry Fair. Let him not be accused of lacking diligence, for all that; in these pages no quirk is left unturned, no hobby unexamined, and amid the wilder flights of fancy there are also pleasing ruminations on our rural past, and our lost relationship with the land and its livestock. In places where winters come so fierce that you get horizontal icicles, Pearson calls up the ghosts of the rivers and the drovers, the shepherds and the showmen; if mostly you'll be laughing like a drain, you'll be spurred to the odd moment of reflection as well.

Pearson manages this because he is, ultimately, a gentle writer; his comic eye is razor-sharp, but never malicious. He says of his preference for the donkey over the horse that the former "owes its survival in this country to its ability to charm and amuse a few enthusiasts", and continues with the modest and uncomplaining thought that, "As a writer I strongly empathise with donkeys."

I can think of a few writers who could use that humility – but I suspect

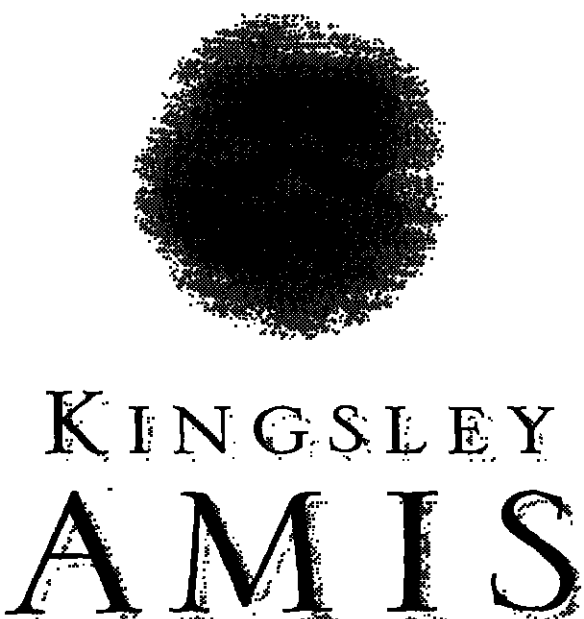
that with this second book, Pearson will win more than a few enthusiasts. He is, after all, addressing major questions here. How many of us have not wondered, at one time or another, why the earwig has its pincers on the wrong end of its anatomy? How many of us have not thought it odd that Satan should opt to stalk the earth in the guise of "a vaguely preposterous and rather smelly farm animal"?

Pearson's portrait of the billy goat as a kind of livestock superlaid is a gem – not least when he considers the possibility that, with his hair cut and his horns shorn, the modern goat may be racked with doubts about his masculinity. Iron Billy, maybe?

But while this passage comes spiced with an authentically spooky tale of sinister goatly goings-on, I find myself pressed to decide if it's the book's finest hour. The ferrets run it close, as do the guinea pigs – but then, when even the index is funny, it's pretty hard to settle on one passage or another as the best. I can only recommend that you lie down somewhere quiet and tuck in – lying down, as I found to my cost, being the only safe posture in which to tackle this rich feast of country fun.

'Distinctive Amis wit ... light, funny and splendid in its prejudices, and at times touching in its compassion'

MALCOLM BRADBURY, *Mail on Sunday*



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Reviewed by Emma Hagestadt and Christopher Hirst

The Book of Modern Scandal by Bruce Palling (Orion, £6.99)

Though it begins with Byron's loping prose (a dismissive letter to Lady Caroline Lamb), most of the 125 garvey gobbets in Palling's tawdry are penned in the urgent staccato of the tabloid. Innocents who missed the "Camillagate" and "Squidgy" tapes will find transcripts here – though Fergie's toe-sucker is a sad omission. Many intriguing entries never made the headlines. Did you know that, like her, Sunny von Bulow's first husband spent years in an irreversible coma? Or that, in 1991, an Australian racing syndicate utilised the scam described in the Sherlock Holmes yarn "Silver Blaze"?

The Best of the Beastly by Natalie Angier (Abacus, £7.99)

Amid the drab columns of the *New York Times*, the sparky prose of this Pulitzer-winning science writer stands out like a hummingbird among sparrows. She declares herself an unrepentant anthropomorphist ("though her description of proteins as 'distorted Nerf balls' is scarcely enlightening on this side of the Atlantic). Her speciality is the surprise revelation: male dolphins are aggressive towards females, sometimes slashing them; periods may be a mechanism against microbes delivered by

being voted the *Spectator's* Backbencher of 1990 ("Fat lot of good that does"). The result is by far the most entertaining diaries of any Labour big gun. Despite battling to shed his hereditary title, Benn wisely retained his devastating public school charm. For one so ardent, he is surprisingly gossipy and humorous. The droll royal encounters are a highlight: "I don't think the Duke of Edinburgh liked the comparison of Bessie Braddock with the Queen."

The Beauty of the Beastly by Natalie Angier (Abacus, £7.99)

Amid the drab columns of the *New York Times*, the sparky prose of this Pulitzer-winning science writer stands out like a hummingbird among sparrows. She declares herself an unrepentant anthropomorphist ("though her description of proteins as 'distorted Nerf balls' is scarcely enlightening on this side of the Atlantic). Her speciality is the surprise revelation: male dolphins are aggressive towards females, sometimes slashing them; periods may be a mechanism against microbes delivered by

sperm. Unfortunately, Angier's are vitiated by screechy feminism and trite self-centredness.

Six Memos for the Next Millennium by Italo Calvino (Vintage, £5.99)

While little more than a pamphlet, the Italian fantasist's final work is a hugely stimulating gift for all who are obsessed by literature. In these passionate essays, Calvino pursues the literary qualities which he prizes above all others: lightness, quickness, exactitude, visibility and multiplicity. Seizing examples from myth and science, celebrating authors as varied as Lucretius, Pynchon and – above all – Borges, it forms a wonderful valediction. Not the least of the book's delights is the one sentence tale by Augusto Monterroso: "When he woke up, the dinosaur was still there."

Evening in Byzantium by Irwin Shaw (Phoenix, £6.99)

Set at the 1970 Cannes Film Festival, this plodding narrative

addresses the current celeb headache of stalking. Not that 48-year-old producer Jesse Craig, who appears to be an *authorial* self-portrait, is too distraught at being door-stepped by 22-year-old hack Gall McKinnon, with her "satiny flesh" and "jewel-blue eyes". The book does not rush its pleasures – it's page 167 before she sees his "insanely stalwart penis". There are a couple of twists in the tail but little entertainment *en route* – unless you count the Brits, who tend to be "hugely fat", "flabby" or "florid and over-dressed".

The Garlic Ballads by Mo Yan (Penguin, £6.99)

Garlic fields, garlic stalks, garlic farts: wherever they go the Chinese peasants of Mo Yan's rural epic can't escape the bulb's pernicious presence. Even the novel's two ill-fated lovers snack on the stuff after a night spent under the stars. A grim portrayal of life in post-revolutionary China (petty bureaucrats and evil-smelling jails), but relieved by sudden cinematic vistas of sun-tipped willows and seas of waving jute. It's easy to see why Mo Yan's best known book *Red Sorghum*, was made into a film.

Andrey Hepburn's Neck by Alan Brown (Sceptre, £5.99)

Toshi is fascinated by foreigners. Aroused at the age of nine by the sight of Audrey Hepburn's neck in *Roman Holiday*, he grows up with a taste for Western women and green-tea tiramisu. But despite his various successes – especially with the language teachers of Tokyo's "Very Romantic English Academy" – Toshi is unhappy with his sexual identity and starts to examine his past for clues. A comic and touching novel about the delights and dangers of cross-cultural canoodling.

Froth on the Daydream by Boris Vian (Quartet, £8)

In 1959, while watching a film version of this novel, Boris Vian became so enraged that he suffered a massive heart attack – a suitably apocalyptic end for one of France's most combustible talents. Sometime jazz player, engineer and black American thriller writer (he found he sold more books this way), Vian's masterpiece about a group

of friends and their additions to the works of Jean-Paul Sartre and raspberry flavoured toothpaste sparkles as wickedly as it did in 1947. Who would have thought that surrealism, or the French, could be so funny.

Ghosting by John Preston (Black Swan, £6.99)

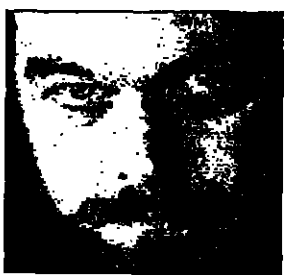
John Preston's very readable and funny first novel tells the unhappy history of veteran broadcaster, Dickie Chambers. A lonely childhood in North London spent listening to his mother's radio leads to local rep and finally a job as a filing clerk in the bowels of the BBC. Here Dickie gets his break when a large insect flies down the throat of the corporation's star radio announcer. Fifties London, and its emerging media world, is evoked in all its grotty glory. Lugubrious shades of Angus Wilson, and a story that could have been lifted straight from the obituary columns.

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Weapon of war or work of art? The liberal conscience is assaulted by Stealth

TOM LUBBOCK



"Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands," sing the girls in the Book of Samuel, and King Saul is gravely offended at the implied slight on his character. But no one sings songs of praise like that any more – not in this part of the world at least, or not at official occasions anyway. The idea of openly celebrating warfare as such is off our agenda. In public ceremonies and in the arts, an attitude of solemn commemoration is the nearest thing; and the arts, usually, are even more unenthusiastic.

The instruments of war find no more favour. The chorale of homage to a nuclear warhead in Michael Berkeley and Ian McEwan's oratorio *Or Shall We Die* was, it needn't be said, savagely ironic. And even the men who gave us "Gotcha!" would probably feel that an annual state parade of military hardware was not quite the British way. We do, however, have the Farnborough Airshow. It's on telly too.

"It's extraordinary in appearance – graceful, beautiful, deadly..." so said

one of the Farnborough commentators during Wednesday's broadcast, as he gazed up in wonder at the new B2 "Spirit" Stealth Bomber. "It's an absolutely amazing sight. Its carefully crafted shape and ultra-secret Stealth coatings give the aircraft a practically non-existent radar signature. Head-on it's hard to spot and it's extremely quiet. The Spirit hardly whispers as it glides by..."

And who wouldn't share his emotion? The Spirit requires no artistic celebration, it's a work of art in itself – and a very modernist one at that. It resembles a piece of dark origami or a designer-boomerang: a regular right-angled triangle with a zig-zag hypotenuse, a pure geometrical abstraction, hard-edged and perfectly smooth. There's no surface detailing, no excremental attachments – no ornamentation so to speak. It's flat and sharp as a blade, seemingly a solid not a hollow object.

This makes it scarily uncreatively. Unlike most other aircraft, civilian or

military, it lacks any anatomy that can be read as quasi-animal or birdlike. There are no separate wings or fins or jets to stand for body-parts; likewise no snouty nose or frontal cockpit-screen to make a face. Comforting anthropomorphism can't get a purchase. The familiar articulation of head, body and limbs is erased. It's a featureless thing in which there's no way to recog-

nise yourself. You hardly imagine there are men inside it.

Its operation becomes mysterious. It shows no visible means of propulsion or attack. As it moves, its power source seems to be, not any physical force, but rather its own solid self-containment: it's charged with an aura, surrounding it and emanating from it, as if it were a magic stone. Again this is like the modernist artwork, the streamlined sculpture or skyscraper, contained, radiant, impermeable – the object that aspires, though sheer purity, to transcend its own physicality. The plane floats in silence. It is, radar-wise, almost invisible. They called it Spirit with good reason.

What's beautiful, mysterious and scary are one here. The Spirit is the epitome of the modern weapon and of the uncanny nature of contemporary warfare. It's no flagrant killing-machine, but something aesthetic and anaesthetic. It embodies the dreams of video targeting and surgical strikes, in which the instruments of war become

a thing remote from their flesh and blood operators and their flesh and blood victims.

You might say, too, that it's the perfect Farnborough showpiece. For what's striking about the whole occasion is the way it admires the grace and power of weapons without mentioning their intended ends, treats them in fact as if they were ends in themselves. All attention is on the flying technology. The commentators never speak of the carnage these "amazing" things are made to cause, and only obliquely of the field of action ("devastating blows to the Iraqi war-machine"). You get the aerobatic displays. The dog-fights and bomb-sites are left to the imagination.

You might say that. And it's true, those commentators don't sound very sensitive to what they're saying and not saying. But for a liberal conscience to find this approach hypocritical or euphemistic is to risk bad faith of another sort. We have these weapons, after all, and almost everyone, of whatever conscience, accepts that we

have to have them and use them sometimes. The Farnborough people admire them, but don't dwell on their uses. Liberals think it's wrong to admire them, and would rather not have to look at them at all; not be reminded that how we live requires their existence. But neither party ultimately wills them away. They just set their "hypocrisies" – the things they prefer to ignore – at different points.

And what would be more honest, more consistent? For the Farnborough folk to revel in slaughter like that chorus in the Book of Samuel? For liberals to affirm an absolute disarmed pacifism? But almost everyone holds back from both a real war ethic and a real peace ethic. And almost nobody can maintain a right attitude to weapons, because it's impossible to find a stable position in between those two extremes. So our weapons remain a great anomaly, things we can't abjure and can't embrace, graceful, beautiful, deadly, or however you phrase it.

Thomas Sutcliffe returns next week

Whatever happened to bubbly Jane?

Jane Horrocks, the woman of a thousand faces, has a new sketch show. Here's hoping she doesn't make the same mistakes as our Emma. By James Rampton



Rada chameleon: (from top) as Philippa, as Cilla in Bosnia, and in pensive mood

There are just two words of warning for any talented young actor attempting to branch out into comedy sketches: Emma Thompson. Dame Emma's efforts with her sketch series, *Thompson*, stand as an object-lesson in how not to go about it. Kinder critics homed in on its self-indulgence and advised her to stick to what she does best – act with great conviction in a circulation-endangering corset.

With her new one-off sketch show, the felicitously titled *Never Mind the Horrocks*, the actress Jane Horrocks now runs the risk of being irradiated by the same high level of vituperation. Seamus Cassidy, the Channel 4 comedy executive who commissioned Horrocks's show, is all too well aware of Emma overtones but thinks they have been avoided. "The feeling around Emma at the time was that she could do no wrong," he remembers. "But she was stretched too thin and relied too much on celebrity mates, and it just wasn't funny enough. Nobody would deny that now. But I don't see a comparison between Emma and Jane. Emma's series was an enormous explosion of energy and enthusiasm which led her to write and perform the whole series. The thing about Jane's series is that she hasn't written that much of it herself."

Which means she could concentrate on the performing – and it has paid off. Despite being 32, she plays with equal facility a gawky young teenager chatting endlessly to her boyfriend on the phone, a stern, middle-aged children's TV presenter, and a doting Mrs Merton-esque blue-rinsed. That's to say nothing of her skills as a mimic. Is there any other actress around who could so accurately portray both Cilla Black and Gita Kapoor from *EastEnders*? Oh yes, and she can sing her socks off too – as wonderful interpretations of Marlene Dietrich and Shirley Bassey prove.

Cassidy makes his pitch to be President of the Jane Horrocks Fan Club, marvelling at her chameleon-like qualities. "For someone you might think it would be easy to pigeon-hole, she has quite a range. She goes from a bulimic in Mike Leigh's *Life is Sweet* to Shirley Bassey. She's a consummately versatile actress, but she's also got a sense of humour – which helps. Some people who are great actors are not that funny. But Jane is naturally funny, she has a comic instinct for the jugular. People laugh when she walks on stage. She's likeable."

Likeable is the word that springs to mind when you come face to face with Horrocks. We meet in the snooker room at the Groucho Club in central London, where her five-foot-two, seven-stone frame is almost dwarfed by the bowl of chips she is ploughing through. Resplendent in a hot-pink mini-dress and black clogs combination, she answers questions in the same down-to-earth language she presumably used when telling the tutors at Rada that she wasn't going to blanchify her thick Lancastrian accent into Received Pronunciation. "My accent has been a source of amusement to people," she observes, "but I actually came across more snobblism in Oldham than at Rada. There the father of a middle-class friend of mine asked me, 'And do you speak English as well?' 'No, just the Swahili'."

This no-nonsense approach permeates her work. In *Never Mind the Horrocks*, she was careful not to appear in every sketch. "That can be nauseating," she says. "If you're saying, 'Look at me, I can do this, that and the other', the audience never get a break. Then it tends to look like showing off. Dan Patterson [the show's producer] was very aware of that. When we were talking about the supporting cast, I suggested lots of friends from the theatre, but Dan rejected them. He didn't want it to become in any way hurrivie." More lessons learnt from Thompson.

But Patterson did encourage Horrocks' bravura impersonations, which she first flourished as a means of entertaining friends during lunchbreak at Oldham Technical College. She caught the showbiz bug at the age of 15 after seeing Barbra Streisand in *A Star is Born*. Her Bassey – all grimaces of sincerity and black feather boas – is particularly near the knuckle. "It's not very fair on Shirley Bassey," Horrocks concedes. "She would be thick-skinned if she didn't mind. I was on Des O'Connor with her and ended up doing an impression of her. In hospitality afterwards, I told her I was embarrassed, but she said, 'Don't worry. I was shaving my armpits at the time and didn't see it'. I hope she's shaving her armpits for a very long time during this show."

Horrocks is glad to be bringing gaiety on to the small screen after such depressing roles as the anxiety-stricken mother in the BBC's *Suffer the Little Children* and the wife nursing a brain-damaged husband in *Some Kind of Life* on ITV. "I'm fed up with tragic heroines," she says. "I'd rather make people laugh than cry – it's better for the soul. I've been playing too many victims of circumstance or social injustice. There's only so much difference you can bring to each of them. Playing a victim, all you're doing is eking out the audience's sympathy. I find it manipulative."

What really brought down the curtain on her life as a tragedian, however, was the trying tour she undertook last year as Lady Macbeth opposite Mark Rylance in the now notorious "Hari Krishna" production of the Scottish play. "It was an exhausting experience," Horrocks confirms. "It wasn't very good for my health. Psychologically, I felt I was turning into a neurotic nutter. I had complete back strain, because I was carrying the weight of the role. That sounds pretentious, but it is ridiculous if you can't shake it off when you go home at night."

She had a year at the RSC straight after Rada but does not envisage doing any more Shakespeare for a while; she would prefer less draining – and, it must be said, more lucrative – roles such as Prunella Scales's uptight daughter in the Tesco com-

mercials. "Doing those ads has given me a feeling of ease that I can pick and choose my work. I don't have to do an episode of *The Bill*, which is a great relief to me."

The other light role Horrocks has relished is Bubble, Edina's scatter PA in *Absolutely Fabulous*. "Bubble was incredibly easy to play," she recalls. "You could be as stupid as possible – which isn't very difficult for me. You could throw it away at the end of the day and think, 'I've got my laughs'. The thing about *Ab Fab* was that it was something we'd never seen before – women behaving badly. In the past, we hadn't been allowed to do that. Jennifer [Saunders, the show's writer and star] was brave enough to do that."

Horrocks goes on to praise Saunders for opening the door for other women comedians. "It is more difficult for women," Horrocks says. "I'm not being all feminist, but men outnumber women in comedy because people have more trouble laughing at women. This is a mass generalisation, but people feel safer with male comedians. People watching women think, 'Is this going to be embarrassing? Please don't do this to yourself.'"

Despite her success – most casting-directors would sell their contacts' book to employ her – life has not always been sweet for Horrocks. She was reportedly less than grunted when the role Jim Cartwright wrote for her in *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* was recently offered by a Hollywood studio to Gwyneth Paltrow. Horrocks is also not noted for suffering fools gladly. On *Memphis Belle*, she rewarded a fellow actor's persistent lateness with a damn good clout. And more than once – when she had chocolate spread licked off her body in *Life is Sweet*, say, or when she urinated on stage as Lady Macbeth – she has attracted headlines she could have done without.

But those sort of incidents only serve to enhance one of her great strengths. "I don't know whether it's a strength or just sheer idiocy," she laughs, "but I think I'm quite brave. What excites me most is doing something that challenges an audience rather than letting them ease off. Sometimes people have to be shocked into thinking, or they just sit there bleary-eyed. Take that scene in *Macbeth*. It should be disturbing and embarrassing, but people pussyfoot around with it. Madness isn't particularly pleasant to observe, it's a loss of control and inhibition. Lots of people sleep-walk and pee their beds. I wanted to show a character seemingly in control at the beginning and out of control at the end."

Cassidy is licking his lips at the prospect of developing *Never Mind the Horrocks* into a series. "I'm having to restrain myself from holding a gun to her head," he says. "She's got so much potential. I feel I know what an awful lot of actors in this country can do. You know that if you cast certain actors, you're always going to get the same thing. But not with Jane. I've no idea what Jane will do next. She could turn her hand to anything."

Except, perhaps, an episode of *The Bill*.

'Never Mind the Horrocks' is on Channel 4 on 19 Sept

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PROMS

BBC Singers; BBC Philharmonic

A mixed bag from the Singers, plus some great French Spanish music. By Adrian Jack

It will take a lot for the BBC Singers to shake off the image of working nags. They tackle such a variety of music, the agility and reading skills required by new works are so daunting, that character and beauty of tone inevitably get pushed from the top of their priority list. Yet in Thomas Lums de Victoria's *Tenebrae Responsories for Maundy Thursday*, which threaded their way, two at a time, through last Tuesday's late-night Prom, they made a good, straight sound for their conductor, Stephen Cleobury. The sopranos were not vibratoless – and why, if women are to sing this music at all, should they be? In the solos, surely a bit of flesh in the voices is allowable, and we got it, though it was actually the steadiest, the fourth girl from the left in the front row, who pleased my ear best.

But then, she wasn't asked to climb to unreasonable heights like two of her colleagues at the end of James MacMillan's *Matri*. It was a bit of a disaster, though if there had been two clones of Yma Sumac, it could have been sensational. MacMillan is a shrewd ear-tickler. Winsome little phrases emerging from and receding into drones, sweet harmony and even a bit of humming towards the end are sure crowd-pleasers.

The Singers' other newish piece was *The Hollow Hills*, by 28-year-old Andrew Simpson. This was a multi-layered, dramatic account of the last days of King Arthur, and worth every penny of the commission fee (it was written two years ago for the Singers' 70th anniversary season). But you couldn't call it original, and Simpson was guilty, at several points, of the harmonic greyness into which non-tonal vocal polyphony easily blurs.

The BBC Philharmonic's Prom on Wednesday could have been designed to prove the wisecrack that the best Spanish music since Victoria has been written by Frenchmen. It didn't include the greatest "Spanish" work of all, Debussy's *Ibéria*, but Ravel's *Rapsodie espagnole* contained more invention than Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* and two suites from *The Three-Cornered Hat* put together. Joaquín Achúcarro, the piano soloist in *Nights*, was almost as demonstrative as conductor Van Pascal Tortelier grating on the rostrum, but the music is all atmospheric background. Nothing happens. And although *The Three-Cornered Hat* makes an exuberant ballet, it does too little to exercise the mind as concert music.

It was a relief to hear something more tangible in Roberto Gerhard's arrangements of Pedrell's folksong settings. At least there were words to follow, and the soprano Jill Gomez (who else?), in good voice, costumed like a flamboyant parrot and projecting for all she was worth.

THEATRE Pentecost, Donmar Warehouse, London

Stewart Parker's play about lives lived on Belfast's sectarian frontline eschews bullet-headedness and reaps considerable dividends, says David Benedict



Brian Doherty and Paul Hickey as Lenny and Peter – roles that have subtle resonance and great emotional weight. Photo: Tristram Kenton

In Stewart Parker's engrossing, magnificently moving *Pentecost* there are, in between bursts of laughter, moments of rapt stillness that other playwrights would kill for. His love of language and his impressive control of structure belie the calmly naturalistic surface, creating a skilfully layered evening that draws you further and further into the hearts and minds of his characters.

Although the play is set in a marooned Belfast house, this isn't one of those hackneyed "trapped in a room" plays. Little about this intimate drama is predictable. The action takes place during the momentous Ulster Workers' Council Strike of 1974, in which militant loyalist workers toppled the power-sharing executive intended to replace direct rule from London with local authority divided between Protestants and Catholics; but anyone scared off by an ignorance of history and politics can relax. Suspensions of dry debate or angry one-sided polemic are swept aside by richly textured writing that glows with warmth and wit.

Trombonist Lenny has inherited the last inhabited house stranded between Protestant and Catholic ghettos. His estranged wife Marian has sold up her antiques business and offers to buy it, lock, stock and barrel, which he agrees to in return for a divorce. Having installed herself, she becomes fascinated by its previous tenant, Lily Matthews, who, as old as the century, lived there until her death, a situation rife with symbolic and dramatic significance. Three other characters take up residence: Marian's childhood friend Ruth (a wonderfully self-contained Morna Regan), who has left her physically abusive husband for the third

time; Lenny's sardonic, muesli-munching friend Peter (a taut, wily Paul Hickey), returning from Birmingham and remembering that homecoming induces "the exact opposite of homesickness"; and, crucially, the chillingly repressed Michele Forbes as Lily's fierce ghost.

Parker's roles are gifts to actors, their ideas and passions rooted in dramatic journeys, the urgency of their private needs and dreams influenced by and reflecting upon the wider political events. Eleanor Methven (a founder-member of the excellent Belfast company Charabanc) glides effortlessly between gently revealed heartbreak and hilarious spirited anger as the seemingly impeccable Marian. Brian Doherty meets her moment by moment, hinting at steel beneath Lenny's fecklessness.

Lynne Parker's sure-footed production for *Rough Magic* is unusually brave, allowing the text to breathe and subtly revealing the balance of the mirrored plotting. As the writing lifts off in the final 20 minutes of confrontation and resolution, she loses her grip slightly, but the images are so strong, you simply don't care.

A tragic sense of irony hangs unspoken over *Pentecost*. The sense of hope that hums throughout this powerful, personal search for spiritual renewal is shadowed by the knowledge that, the year after its premiere, Parker died at the age of 47. He left behind a handful of classics. *Northern Star*, which *Rough Magic* will revive at the Dublin Theatre Festival, is one. This is another. Go.

Booking: 0171-369 1732. To 28 Sept

READING

Peter Ackroyd, Books Etc, London

He was wearing his fiction cap this time. And since the cap fits, why not? By Michael Glover

There are some things about autumn that never seem to change: the sudden appearance of Keats's "Ode to Autumn" on the classroom walls of fee-paying schools, for example; or a new book by Peter Ackroyd. The only question worth asking with regard to the latter is: is it to be a hefty biography of some neglected visionary or a gargantuan work of visionary fiction? This autumn it's the turn of the work of visionary fiction. The book's marvellously resonant title is *Milton in America*, and here's the plot: Milton gets transported to the New World, founds the colony of New Milton, and turns monster, persecuting poor Catholic women for drooling over their missals.

One balmy evening this week, Thursday to be precise, Ackroyd found himself in the company of 50-odd Ackroyd devotees at Books Etc on the Charing Cross Road. He'd been transported there to do something that he didn't especially want to do – read a slab from his new book – because, according to himself, he's not very good at it.

"The point is," he said to the poor interviewer who, just moments before, had tossed half a bottle of gaseous mineral water over his list of questions in his nervy over-eagerness to shake Ackroyd's thirst with something other than the bottles that were ranged around him in mock-homage – a bottle of Beck's and a full bottle of plonk. "Yes, the point is..." said Ackroyd, who looked a little unsteady on his feet, and a little puffed-out too – as if his inner tube had just been replaced and then pumped up a little over-zealously by a boy with a bicycle pump – "...the point is..." he went on in that fairly tight and tripping voice of his. "Whiting is whiting and thepeaking is thepeaking, and I don't usually make the transition." He was wrong, though: the chapter he read out – the shortest one in the book, in order not to overtax himself – was as well delivered as anyone else in that room could have delivered it, and that gorgeous lisp of his served as a kind of emotional intensifier.

And there's no denying it: Ackroyd is something of a literary phenomenon – author of 14 books, and in possession of a cast-iron contract that commits him to writing eight more. "Eight!" spluttered the interviewer, "but that's the work of a lifetime!" Ackroyd himself seemed quite nonchalant at the prospect. "What else would I do with my time?" he said, staring into the middle distance – perhaps he could see some figure (a prophet or a beggar maybe, or some artful mingling of the two) tapping at the window glass that none of us could see. "Most of the time I feel under-employed. I'm hardly tied to my desk. In fact, I spend a good part of my day lying on the rug."

TELEVISION Dangerfield (BBC1) Who needs new storylines, when you can have the same old face and a trusty four-wheel drive? By Jasper Rees

Is there a bad smell around Nigel Le Vaillant? He plays perhaps the least putrid character on television, a man whose decency is measured in cableknits. But after two series almost the entire cast of *Dangerfield* has backed off in unison, as if in retreat from the mother and father of all farts. Amanda Redman, who played the twinklepupilled love interest, has sidled away with *Dangerfield*'s first producer to front the forthcoming *Beck*. Sean Maguire, who played his good-for-nothing son, is

marketing the same sort of persona in the pop charts. Lisa Faulkner, the goody-two-shoes daughter, and George Irving, the leathery detective, found other fish to fry too.

To lose one co-star, Dr Dangerfield, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose four looks like something more drastic than carelessness. At least he hasn't been ditched by his trusty four-wheel drive. One thing you could never pin on Dangerfield is carelessness. In every sense, the show provides a vehicle for Le Vaillant,

which is why it probably doesn't matter what happens to the rest of the cast.

The roles of his two offspring have been handed down to another couple of bubbly, squeaky types, one of them the latest tall thin thing from *Blue Peter*. And although after one episode there's no new love interest, the widower Dangerfield has started visiting a bereavement counsellor who just so happens to be the sensitive dishy type cruising elegantly into middle age that he gets all puppyish about. Ladbroke's have stopped

taking bets on the likelihood of a mid-series encounter on the tinsel hockey pitch. It's as sure as his ex is ex.

So some things never change. We can, however, report the first sighting in a series set in Warwickshire of a character with a Birmingham accent. A whole roomful, in fact, the first episode taking place in and around a local council full of frothy Mansellalikes. Funny, isn't it, how there are long-running serials set everywhere in the British Isles, apart from the second city. Black Coun-

try is the black sheep of regional accents, the one that never gets past the market researchers.

The leader of the council was of course far too plump a role to go to a Brum, so they gave it to Keith Allen. One day someone will make a huge leap of the imagination and cast Allen as a goodie. For the moment, anyone portrayed by him, including his council leader with a frankly implausible vendetta against the police, might as well have 666 name-tagged across his forehead.

A fourth series of *Dangerfield* has already been commissioned, giving the show a chance to mislay even more characters. But losing actors is of less pressing concern than finding plots. It's standard practice for vehicles to divert all incident through one character, even if in real life the job he does wouldn't call for it (see also *Cracker*). *Dangerfield* has so many plotlines re-routed through him that the scripts are beginning to look like Spaghetti Junction. Which is as close to Birmingham as drama dares stray.

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overview

Stephen Poliakoff's metaphorical portrait of creativity centres on a sleazebag fraud in a Nineties university department and stars Douglas Hodge and Frances de la Tour, directed by Ron Daniels.

Stily Henri-Georges Clouzot made his classic thriller *Les Diaboliques* in French. Phew, it's been re-made in American by Jeremiah (National Lampoon's *Kinase Vacation*) Chechik with Sharon Stone and Isabelle Adjani.

Bilingual, the latest album from Neil 'n' Chris is coloured by their recent tour of Latin America with Latin-tinged rhythms and jazz chords as heard in the street anthem-style single.

critical view

Paul Taylor deplored some cardboard characterisations but enjoyed "a thought-provoking evening but not one without giggles and irritations". "Absorbing and beautifully acted," approved the *Telegraph*. "Poliakoff has resumed his place as one of our most exciting playwrights," saluted the *FT*. "Half mystery-thriller, half revenge tragedy and always compelling," cheered the *Guardian*. "Hodge gives a wonderful performance... a mixed success," murmured the *Times*. "Engrossing... the chief flaw is that it is too simple," worried the *Standard*.

Ryan Glibbey (a self-confessed Stone worshipper) felt that "there's nothing to suggest that the makers of *Diabolique* even know why their version exists." "How to murder a classic thriller," fulminated the *Times*. "Redundant... a travesty," scoffed *Time Out*. "Crazy, gross and generally half a mess with very a scary moment," snorted the *FT*. "On the brink of camp and hopelessly beached in a bad adaptation full of gothic clichés, eventually falls right in," concluded the *Spectator*. "Adjani overworks her two expressions," shuddered the *Standard*.

Andy Gill was a trifle suspicious. "It is difficult to see what exactly it is they like about foreign parts on this showing when the whole world seems to be another disco to them." "Their brittle sense of cool has been almost entirely replaced by a warm, inclusive humanity," admired *Q*. "The heavenly sound of two chips and lots of microchips," raved *Time Out*. "Selmon has their music sounded so rich," applauded *NME*. "Saturday Night Forever: a fitting finale to Pet Shop Boys' finest album... and a happier ending than anyone could have predicted," exulted *Melody Maker*.

on view

In repertoire at the Cottesloe, National Theatre, London SE1 (0171-928 2252).

You really want to know? Oh, all right, it's Cert 18, 107 minutes long and at a cinema near you... but not for long.

12 tracks, 52 minutes, on Parlophone COPS0170

our view

Flawed but intriguing with yet another winning performance from Frances de la Tour

Sharon Stone shares the same initials as the role's previous incumbent Simone Signoret. All similarities end there. Rent the original.

Of course, if you hate anything to do with disco, you won't want to know. However...



DUFF
HART-DAVIS

Whether or not a headless ghost stalks the valley road, as local legend claims, Woodchester Park, near Stroud, is a fascinating place. The three-mile, heavily-wooded cleft cuts so deeply through high-lying farmland that anyone walking along it has the sensation of being lost in an ocean of trees: waves of forest, rising steeply to the horizon on either hand, seem to shut off the outside world.

Until last year, the valley was private property, and most of it was closed to the public. Then it was bought by the National Trust, which last week opened it to all.

The throwing-open of a hitherto secret valley naturally excites apprehension among people who have known the place for years. It also raises the question of what should be done with the few wild tracts of country remaining in Britain: should the public be excluded, so that nature can reign undisturbed, or should people have free access?

Woodchester is unique not only in its topography. It also boasts an extraordinary country house in the form of the Mansion, begun in the 1850s, abandoned unfinished 10 years later, never completed, and never properly inhabited except by bats. For more than a century the Mansion, also, was in private hands, beautifully built out of Cotswold stone in French Gothic style, but gradually decaying. In the 1980s it was offered to the National Trust, but rejected, on the grounds that the expense even of stabilising it would be prohibitive. Parts of the house would have collapsed had not Stroud District Council courageously stepped in and bought it, with the help of a grant from English Heritage. In 1988, the Council leased it at a peppercorn rent to the Woodchester Mansion Trust, a group of volunteers.

Since then this body has made sterling efforts to save the building, raising money by opening it on selected weekends and putting in hand the most urgent repairs. The group's hope now is that the national lottery will provide a large part of the £3m needed to make the whole structure safe.

The present situation is thus a curious one. The Mansion, owned by the Council, run by volunteers, and closed to the public most of the time, stands in the middle of the park now owned by the National Trust and open every day of the year. Another problem is that the valley is the scene of the country's longest-running badger experiment, in which staff of the Central Science Laboratory are trying to determine whether or not bovine tuberculosis is transmitted to cattle by badgers.

Yet fears that the Trust would wreck Woodchester have so far proved unfounded. A new car-park has been skilfully tucked away in a field above the woods, and only pedestrians are allowed down the gravel track. At the point where the valley opens out, a sweep of poor trees has been removed and the ground restored to parkland – a substantial improvement. Miles of waymarked paths have been established, and a good start made on the colossal job of thinning the woods.

The result of all this work is that visitors can walk for hours on well-graded paths, starting along one which passes directly behind the Mansion on a level with the bat-haunted bell-tower. They can see down on to the five artificial lakes (previously invisible) which lie in chain along the valley bottom, and watch buzzards wheel overhead.

Anomalies remain. The gamekeeper, though supposed to keep down pests such as rabbits and grey squirrels, is not allowed to fire his gun – for safety reasons – while members of the public are about. The research workers now have to hump their cage-traps, with hefty live badgers in them, over the barbed-wire fences put up to keep people out of sensitive areas. Locals are worried that visitors' dogs will course the resident roe and barking deer. Walkers fetch up outside the Mansion, disgruntled to find it closed.

All the same, it is surely right that the public should have access to such a large and beautiful area. There is no good reason for keeping it closed. With access carefully controlled, I cannot see that wildlife or environment will suffer.

Yet I also know, deep down, that something has been lost. Gone for ever is the wonderful isolation in which the valley was once shrouded, the sense of mystery, the other-worldiness, the feeling that you if you went down there in the autumn dusk you really might meet a headless figure in 18th-century costume gliding silently along the dusty track that skirts the lakes.

British shellfishers are having a tough time. So are British crayfish, under threat from imported American cousins



Mussel man:
Terrence Large
with his grade A
shellfish

Photograph: Harry
Cory-Wright

When oysters are your world

...you may need to find new buyers. Daniel Butler visits a family firm of shellfish breeders

Terrence Large is proud of his pedigree. "Members of our family have been shellfishermen for generations: it was probably a Large who supplied the Roman camp at Brancaster, less than a mile from here. You can still find oyster shells on the site – they were supposed to be the best in the whole Empire."

The 49-year-old oyster-and-mussel farmer has just begun a new season. With his son and partner, Thomas, he will spend the coldest months of the year up to his waist in icy Norfolk waters, combing up to five tonnes of mussels and oysters every week from the creeks around Brancaster Sluice. But although Terrence says their shellfish are as good today as they were when his ancestors were fighting the invading legions, he finds himself facing fresh threats to his livelihood.

One problem is the seasonal nature of the trade. Shellfish are not normally sold in months without an "r" – a tradition dating from pre-refrigeration days when hot weather and bacteria made summer oyster-eating a perilous activity. Although modern hygiene and storage methods mean this is no longer true, old habits die

hard. Until recently the income from winter sales was enough to tide mussel farmers through the slack summer months, but prices have stagnated for 10 years and so now the Larges find themselves fishing for crab and lobster while preparing for future crops.

Oysters are bought in as "seed" – tiny babies a few millimetres across – and are suspended in big plastic baskets just below the water's surface. "Because the water is so pure, they grow exceptionally well here," says Thomas proudly.

When it comes to mussels, the backbone of their business, the Larges find their own supplies of youngsters, dredging up the one-inch "scalps" (pronounced "scorps") from breeding beds in the Wash. These are transplanted into the creeks behind their home. From then on Thomas says his principle role is to maintain the banks around the beds. These not only mark out ownership and ensure the crop is not washed away, but increase the water flow. This is vital to the growth of both mussels and oysters because they are filter feeders, sieving minute particles of organic matter.

It is the quality and volume of the tidal

flow which ensure the Larges' shellfish remain graded among the best in Europe: "There are several grades of shellfish – from A through to D," says Terrence. "Our oysters are grade A – so pure we can sell them straight from the sea without doing anything to them. Although the mussels are just as safe, they are in group B, because they grow in the creek silt and so need to have the particles of grit washed out of them."

The Larges' oysters are ready at a year and a half while their mussels can be harvested in as little as six months. Although these are still collected by hand, multi-tined potato forks, nets and rakes, technology intervenes once the mussels are ashore where they are graded in a revolving mesh cylinder which shakes them into varying sizes. Small shells are returned unharmed to the beds to finish growing, while those destined for market have to be processed according to EC regulations. This means a two-day wash in fresh water while being doused in ultra-violet light to kill bacteria.

This last part of the process irks the traditionalist Terrence. "We were told all the expensive machinery was there to

make a level playing field across Europe," he says. "Now we find that while we are processing our mussels for 42 hours, the French only wash theirs for half the time." And the rules are strictly policed here, with one fisheries officer to just five local ports: "He's on duty every day and is always on the dock in one port or another so we're constantly being inspected," he says. "In Spain there are just three officials for the whole of the country – and they're based in Madrid."

In general Terrence is more concerned by competition from fellow Britons. "Our biggest threat comes from middlemen who sell cheap and in bulk," he says. "They are just there for a quick buck and some break the rules."

Over the past 30 years the business has also been affected by changing consumer tastes. Until recently the bulk of their products went to traditional Cockney fish stalls, but the advent of fast food and McDonald's has largely destroyed this. "We now make most of our money selling directly to local restaurants," says Terrence. "That's how we manage to get a decent return in spite of prices not changing for a decade."

THE SUNDAY REVIEW



Whatever happened to the idyll of growing up – to those innocent, carefree days before child abuse, abductions and mass divorce? Geraldine Bedell and Blake Morrison lead a major two-part investigation into the realities and myths of contemporary childhood

Plus: Alistair Cooke talks exclusively to Sue Gaisford

IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

Trouble at the fish farm: where diversification has spelt disaster

Slow business and increased competition in the fish farming world has had a disastrous effect on one wild species. British crayfish have come under threat since farmers, in a move to diversify, started to breed signal, or American, crayfish.

"It would be fair to call signal crayfish the grey squirrels of Britain's waterways," says Mary Gibson, a freshwater ecologist at English Nature, the body that advises the government on conservation issues.

"It's bigger and more aggressive than the native, white-clawed, crayfish so it out-competes them as well as preying on young white-claws. Worse, the signals carry a plague which is devastating the natives, but to which they seem immune."

How did this situation arise? Following the successful introduction of rainbow trout in the Sixties, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) was looking for another aquaculture crop and spotted imported crayfish on the menus of exclusive restaurants. There was clearly a market for this lobster substitute. The American species (*Pacifastacus lenisculus*) seemed perfect for the job because it grows faster and bigger than our native species.

"They could be farmed easily, had high margins and there were ready markets both at home and abroad," explains Ms Gibson. In 1976 the first specimens were imported by a Dorset farmer. Unfortunately, little research had been done on the potential damage that could arise if these crayfish established themselves in the wild. And this didn't take long, as crayfish are at home both in and out of water. In no time dozens of farm crayfish



The grey squirrel of the sea: Signal crayfish

Photograph: John Clegg

clambered out of their enclosures to trundle off in search of pastures new.

Reports of escapees were soon coming from across southern England, but at first there was no indication of the devastation they would wreak. In 1981, however, an angler near Bristol noticed native crayfish were missing from his favourite fishing spot. On investigation, the river bed was found to be littered with dead white-claws and within months this was being repeated across the country. The killer turned out to be a fungus which had been known on the Continent since the 1860s, but until then was unknown in Britain. It transpired that the main link between these outbreaks of plague was the proximity of fish farms where signal crayfish were being bred: signals could carry the disease, but were immune to its effects.

The plague is still scything through

British waters and the once-common native species is now a rarity in most English rivers and streams. The situation is particularly acute south of a line running from Bristol to the Wash, but in just 20 years the invaders have spread rapidly from their original release sites and now the first reports are coming in from the vast Trent and Severn catchment areas. In contrast, once established signals can reach very high densities indeed. On parts of the Thames and Kennet anglers find fishing almost impossible because signals are so quick to steal the bait.

The scale of the disaster is particularly alarming as native crayfish are reliant on clean water and were already suffering from agricultural pollution. Today they are one of our most protected water creatures: their capture is illegal under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and they are

listed as one of 116 priority species across Europe. In contrast, the pollution-resistant invaders are recognised pests and since this spring, moving them to new sites has become illegal. The authorities are particularly anxious to prevent their arrival in Wales and Scotland where so far they are largely absent.

Although much of the colonisation has been under the signals' own steam, all too often, they move with human help – either accidentally in fish consignments or as deliberate introductions. At prices reaching £4 a pound, there is money to be made from ranching wild stocks, avoiding the costs of farming.

"It is outrageous that they can still be bought in pet shops as 'freshwater lobsters' to be put in garden ponds," comments Ms Gibson.

English Nature is concerned by the proliferation of hunters. "Adult signals are much bigger than native crayfish, but are not always easy to identify," says the ecologist. She is worried that some isolated, surviving pockets of white-claws could be wiped out in a case of mistaken identity. Despite the efforts at stemming the invading tide, it looks as if yet again we are trying to shut the door long after the horse has bolted. If the aliens really are here to stay, it could signal – all too literally – the end for our native species.

Daniel Butler

A Guide to Identifying
Freshwater Crayfish in Britain
and Ireland is available from the
Environment Agency's enquiry
line 0645-333111

Would your child choose fish with fennel or porridge?

Designer babyfoods are aimed at guilty parents says Ruth Picardie

It had to happen. After premium nappies and Heinz purified water with a hint of strawberry (42p for 100ml), Britain's first designer babyfood is about to hit a supermarket near you. Developed with the help of Mark Hix, executive chef at The Ivy and Le Caprice, the Original Fresh Babyfood range is "natural", "healthy", packed with fresh herbs and starts at 99p for 100g. Four-month-olds may like to start their evening meal with Sweet Potato and Carrot with a Hint of Cinnamon followed by Rice with Courgette and a Little Banana. Seven-month-olds can move on to Mushroom and Sweet Pepper Risotto (served with honey and a pinch of turmeric) or perhaps the Baked Fish with Fennel and Potato ("succulent small bites of hoki and potato subtly flavoured with fennel and dill"), both £1.29 for 175gm.

Once upon a time babies sucked rum from their pacifiers and munched maltodextrin - the monosodium glutamate of the babyfood world - in their powdered food. Then the middle-classes discovered healthy eating and good mothers were urged to spend their nights puréeing organic carrots and freezing them in individually labelled cubes. Actress Leslie Ash, an example to us all, preferred her children, Joseph and Max, to have "fresh juice and steamed vegetables every day". Liz Earle, the author of the *Quick Guide to Baby & Toddler Foods* (Boxtree), suggested mothers bake potato skins instead of buying crisps and eschew iced cakes and biscuits for "a snack of popcorn tossed with sunflower seeds and soy sauce". If we failed, parents were saved from NCT Coventry by feeding their loved ones Baby Organix muesli - almost as good as the real thing and only three times the price. Now we can feel even less guilty, with Fresh Creamy Parsnip and Potato "delicately flavoured with cumin and coriander".

Clearly, babyfood for the guilty middle-classes is big business: the creators of the range, Keith and Belinda Mitchell, may be a "real" couple whose fashionably named tots Oscar and Clementine feature prominently on the press release, but they are hard-headed business people who believe there is a £20m market for fresh baby food, of which they can grab £6m. Similarly, Tesco is now selling "child-sized cherry tomatoes" packaged like sweets, price 49p for a 100g tube (that's £2 per lb in old money). But to paraphrase Shirley Conran, if life's too short to stuff a mushroom then there's certainly no time to make Cauliflower and Broccoli Cheese (With a Hint of Nutmeg), only for it to be comprehensively smeared in baby's hair and then thrown on the floor. If M&S food (delicious, convenient, expensive) is an essential part of adult life, why not indulge your babies, too?

Unfortunately, the babyfood business is full



Child's play: Ruth Picardie's children get to grips with their food. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

of backlashes: today's healthy food (honey, soya milk, peanuts) is tomorrow's killer (bacteria, infertility, allergies). And here comes another one.

"Fresh" is like "natural", I'm afraid," says Tom Sanders, professor of nutrition and dietetics at King's College, London. "Meaningless. Nutrients are nutrients. It doesn't make any difference how they're processed, given that vitamins are added to bottled food."

But there's worse to come. "This range appears to be applying adult nutritional values

- ie low fat and nice taste - to babies, which is not appropriate. The important thing is to have a source of iron, since anaemia is a significant problem in infants. And the best source of that is meat. In any case, with weaning you should start with one flavour at a time, to minimise the risk of triggering allergies. Lack of variety is a good thing."

"Quite honestly," confirms Dr Jackie Stordy, senior lecturer in nutrition at Surrey University, "courgettes aren't going to help the child much. They might be what the parents are eat-

ing, but vegetable purées tend to have a low energy density and infants need calories and other nutrients in a more concentrated form. Vitamin C deficiency is almost never a problem, but studies have shown that parents who are focused on weight loss underfeed their children. Up to 5 per cent of paediatric admissions are for slow growth."

But doesn't it at least taste nice - the all important value for the fussy baby, to whom we are desperate to feed something, even lowly courgette? "A baby's palate is not concerned

with nuances of taste in the way adult palates are," says Ursula Arens, senior nutrition scientist at the British Nutrition Foundation. "A six-month-old is not going to get excited about cumin and coriander." The message? Let them eat Weetabix and Heinz beef strog. "Commercial baby foods are better than the stuff mothers prepare at home," says Tom Sanders. "They're sterile, with less salt, and added iron. Look at kids today: bloody enormous." The only problem for the guilty mum? A bug called BSE.

When a trip to the supermarket involves a lot of small print

By Jenny Knight

Rosemarie Rymer summons her reserves of patience when she visits supermarkets near her home in Wimbourn St Giles, Dorset. While other shoppers carelessly hurl food into trolleys, Rosemarie must laboriously scrutinise the labels on every can, packet and wrapper. She dare not buy anything containing peanuts. Her youngest son, Nicholas, aged six, suffers a potentially fatal allergy that sends him into convulsions and causes severe breathing problems.

"I look very carefully at everything I buy," she says. "An awful lot of foods contain peanut oil - even ice-cream cones. It takes me a long time to get round a supermarket. Often vegetable oil is listed in the ingredients with-

out specifying what type. There are a lot of things I'm not sure about like fish fingers. Some toiletries contain Arachis oil which is derived from peanuts. I don't know how people cope who are allergic to fish, wheat or dairy products."

Nicholas was 18 months old when he bit into a peanut butter sandwich. Two hours later he went into convulsions. His next attack, again caused by peanut butter, came at a birthday party when he was three, followed by a recent incident caused by an unknown trigger. He travels with an EpiPen which can be used to deliver a life-saving adrenalin injection.

"The first time he had an initial reaction of swelling and hives. A couple of hours later he

had difficulty breathing and was throwing himself about. It was terrifying."

The labelling of ingredients has improved enormously since 1994 when 17-year-old Sarah Reading died after eating a dessert containing crushed peanuts. Her father, David, launched the Anaphylaxis Campaign which now has 3,100 members. He reckons that one in every 80 children has a mild nut allergy with one in every 400 suffering a more severe reaction.

"Supermarkets are quite good at labelling but restaurants are riskier. If members aren't sure about a product, I encourage them to contact the manufacturers to find out and to raise awareness of the dangers. The most common severe allergies are to peanuts, almonds, wal-

nuts and sesame seeds. A small number are highly allergic to milk, eggs and even fruit. About six or seven deaths a year are attributed to anaphylactic shock, but the real figure is probably higher," says David Reading.

Sainsbury's produces booklets listing nut, soya, milk, egg, gluten and shell fish-free products. The nut booklet runs to 33 pages and lists more than 2,000 nut-free products. There is also a telephone help-line.

Marks & Spencer labels products in large lettering with the words "contains nuts" or "contains peanuts". A list of nut-free products is available in stores. Tesco has a range of fact sheets and leaflets giving advice on food allergies and also a telephone advice service.

Many stores are reluctant to guarantee products are free of nuts in case they have been accidentally contaminated. Mark Hodson suffered a severe allergic attack after eating Sainsbury's pesto sauce. An investigation found the Italian supplier had made walnut sauce on the same day it made the pesto.

"We want manufacturers to improve staff awareness and education and for cleaning equipment to be improved to counter the problems of cross contamination," says Mr Reading. "Labels that say 'May contain nuts' are irritating. They whittle away choice and confuse the customer. A diet can become limited when there are so many products people dare not eat."

Six of the best loafers

Stylist: Charlie Harrington. Photographer: Tony Buckingham



1 High heels with tassels, Patrick Cox, £196. These high heels in antique gold leather with their tassels details are more fashion shoes than practical. But their height makes them flattering to the leg, good shoe for wearing with skirts and they'll certainly withstand a British winter. From Patrick Cox. Enquiries 0171 235 5599



2 Flat lace-ups, Russell & Bromley, £110. These smooth, antique-effect leather lace-ups are classics. Team with wide leg trousers for a masculine look. Available from Russell & Bromley, 24-25 New Bond Street, London W1. Enquiries 0171 629 6903.

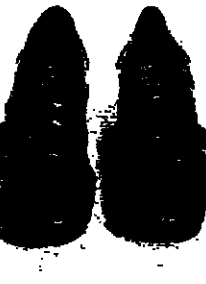


3 Shiny black loafers, Armando Pollini, £165. If it is a neat, strong look you're after try these black loafers in high shine leather with an engraved metal bar. Available from Armando Pollini, 35 Brook Street, London W1. Enquiries 0171 629 7606.

4 High heeled lace-up, Jones the Bootmaker, £69.99. Although these might resemble something your Grandmother would have worn, they're just the thing for this winter. Available from branches of Jones the Bootmaker nation-wide. Enquiries 01323 649 408.



5 Square-toed, mock crock loafers, Bertie, £69.95. These loafers with fashionably square toes and belt buckle detail are great value for money: a good sturdy shoe that should last and last. Available from Bertie stores nation-wide. Enquiries 0171 935 2002.



6 Button-detail loafer, Pied a Terre Rouge, £139. For understated chic you can't beat this pair of high shine square toed loafers with their smart side buttons. A modern classic. Available from selected branches of Pied a terre. Enquiries 0171 491 3837.



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ING 542

shopping

Nothing dusty about Cresser's

Hamish Scott explores Edinburgh's bespoke brushmakers, Cresser's of Victoria Street

Victoria Street, in Edinburgh's Old Town, is the very model of a city centre back-street. Curving through a gorge below the Royal Mile, where slick and prosperous establishments cater for the needs of tourists, the cobble lane is home to specialist food shops, lively restaurants and bars, jewellers and antique dealers. The atmosphere is at once sophisticated and bohemian. This is a place to come in search of the unusual or to find the unexpected.

The most unexpected sight of all, in a row of colourfully trendy shop-fronts, is the facade of Robert Cresser, specialist brushmakers. A canvas awning proudly states 'Established 1873' above a window filled with sturdy brooms and strange, old fashioned implements. Inside, the shop is Dickensian and dark, with a wooden counter and bare floor. Long brooms and tin pails dangle from the ceiling, whilst smaller brushes, in every shape and form imaginable, bristle on the crowded shelves, hidden behind rolling pins and wooden bowls, bales of string, and bootjacks.

"This is called a 'nosey parker'," Stan Ross explains, picking up a curiously angled brush. "It's for cleaning under banisters, but it gave the maid a good excuse to eavesdrop on the drawing room. And this one here's a 'spokie', for scrubbing between wheel-spokes. If you haven't got a vintage car, it's just the job for radiator pipes." Mr Ross knows the name and proper use of every brush, having been employed at Cresser's for more than quarter of a century.

Robert Cresser was the eldest son in a family of brushmakers who had lived and worked in the medieval tenement since way back in the 19th century. But though he and his brother John were fine craftsmen, it was their sister Susan who possessed the business brain. In 1873, she turned their lower rooms into a fine, up-to-date emporium providing for all the cleaning needs of Edinburgh and the grooming of its citizens.

For more than half a century, Susan ruled over the shop and her two brothers, keeping a close eye both on their workmanship and drinking habits. In a city with a reputation for refined perfectionism, Cresser's had to meet demanding standards. On her retirement in 1930, Susan sold the firm to her book-keeper, Mrs Athie, confident that she was a woman after her own heart who would never countenance the unnecessary extravagance of change. So, for another 40 years, business went on pretty much as usual and residents of Morningside could still rely on Cresser's for their telescopic cornice brushes, whilst artists in Grassmarket had a ready source of hog's-hair 'fitches' for their watercolours. Then in 1970, Mrs Athie died and to the horror of her loyal work-force, her daughter showed no interest in brushes.

It was a young, ambitious employee who saved the day. Stephen Gilhooly, then in his



Brushing up: assistant Garry Turner sorts through the goods (above); and a selection of Cresser's products
Photograph: Colin McPherson

early 20s, bought the business and moved Stan Ross down from the workshop to serve behind the counter. Since then there have been times when it was touch and go whether Cresser's would survive the advent of the plastic dustpan. Two years ago the shutters closed for eighteen months and it appeared that yet another corner of old Edinburgh had vanished. It was the pressure and encouragement of customers whose families had shopped at Cresser's through the generations that persuaded Mr Gilhooly to reconsider his decision. Where else could they find a proper bath-brush, curved to match the tub's contours and with a two-foot handle to save them from back-ache?

At the end of June this year, Cresser's doors reopened, the interior unaltered. The shop's location, in the heart of what were previously gloomy tenements and sinister dark wynds, is now revitalised and fashionable, though Mr Gilhooly sees no need to keep up with passing fads. Trendy health-care shops may extol the properties of skin-care brushes made from Mexican organic fibres as though they were some new discovery, but Cresser's has been selling them for 40 years. The mysteriously vast requirements of the Boy Scout movement for bales of sisal binder-twine have not diminished since the days of Baden-Pow-

ell and nor has global warming yet saved Edinburgh's householders from needing sturdy 'wet and dry brooms' to clear each winter's snow. What reason could there be to rationalise the product list or rearrange displays that have been perfectly acceptable since 1873?

There are now signs at Cresser's that a cautious business eye is being cast towards the future. Mr Ross, in idle moments, has been scraping rotting plaster from the ancient, barrel-vaulted stairs. Although the building is not being modernised, it is undergoing some much-needed restoration. With the main workshops now in Portobello, there are plans to allow the public up to the upper floors where repairs to well-loved brushes are still undertaken at benches that were antique even in Miss Athie's day. There is even talk of a mail order catalogue some time in the next few years. For the moment customers appear satisfied with the traditional arrangement of telephoning with requirements and paying on delivery. "Hopefully, there's not a brush we can't do," Mr Gilhooly claims with pride. If what you need is not out on display, stuck somewhere behind binder-twine and bootjacks, it can probably be made to order. That has always been the system. No-one who knows Cresser's would wish to see such a tradition swept away.

bazaar



Top ten

Parents have been stocking up on school clothes and desk accessories for their children over the last fortnight in preparation for the great return to school. This is Woolworth's top ten bestseller list from last week:

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1 200 leaf, wide ruled, A4 pad | 99p |
| 2 Parker 15 special ball pen | £2.99 |
| 3 Illuminated globe | £11.00 |
| 4 Fx82 sc5 Calculator | £7.99 |
| 5 150 punched pockets | £3.50 |
| 6 Boys' front pleat trousers (grey) | £10.99 |
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| 8 Girls' pinafore dress (grey) | £8.99 |
| 9 Girls' long sleeved twin pack blouses (white) | £6.50 |
| 10 Boys' long sleeved twin pack shirts (white) | £6.50 |

Good thing

Little Book Cards, £1.99

Greetings cards are ludicrously expensive these days. Bright squiggles on recycled paper can cost as much as £4.99 if they claim to be 'handpainted'. And most mass-produced efforts start at around a quid. For an appreciative friend it may be worth it, but for a teething youngster cards are pointless. Or at least they were until Walker Books hit upon the idea of producing a series of mini books that double as greetings cards. Each one comes with a little name plate inside the front cover for the sender to write an appropriate message. And of course they all have tiny matching envelopes.



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Mad thing

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You saw the ad and bought the dress. But what about the hatchback?

Meg Carter looks at the spin-off industry created by cult commercials

Unbelievable but true, a dress worn in the latest Gold Blend TV commercial was sold for £2,500 at auction in June. Meanwhile Harry, the angel-faced toddler in the Safeway advertising campaign, recently launched his own range of tea-towels, mugs and badges. And Terry, star of the Pot Noodle ads, has his own fan club with the obligatory range of merchandise due out this autumn.

Proof, if any were needed, of the pervasive power of advertising. But make no mistake, the "cult" status enjoyed by a growing number of ads is no accident. Advertisers are finally waking up to the potential of selling us not only their products, but a range of campaign spin-offs, too. Insiders call it the "Levi's effect" as each time the jeans brand launches a new commercial, the soundtrack inevitably ends up riding high in the pop charts.

Certain ads have always caught the public's imagination. When Volkswagen ran a TV commercial featuring a young woman apparently driving to a wedding (in fact, she was just about to get divorced), hundreds of women inundated BMP DDB Needham, the agency behind the campaign, with requests for VHS copies. The ad's success even persuaded pop group The Bluebells, whose song "Young at Heart" featured in the ad, to re-form.

Meanwhile, another VW commercial - featuring a small girl being driven through the mean streets of a big city - was immortalised in greetings cards and posters by VHS. Sales were apparently fuelled by mums eager to show hairdressers how to re-create the blonde, ringletted look for their own little dears.

Sometimes, even the most peripheral minutiae can catch the public's eye. Sales of a pair of Tiffany earrings (£85) worn in one Gold Blend ad soared after the commercial broke on air.

It was only a matter of time before some sharp suit decided to cash in. Amongst the first was the fashion industry. Debenhams reproduced the Just Divorced girl's hat for under £30. When Nicole, the French gamine in the Renault Clio campaign, appeared in one ad wearing a scoop-front spotty dress, a high street craze was born. "We were inundated with calls," says Mark Robinson, new business director at Publicis, Renault's ad agency. Luckily, Miss Selfridge came out with a similar number at just the right time: the skirt sold at £19.99. "We referred all callers to their local branch."

Then came coffee. Gold Blend's "will they,



won't they?" romantic saga has spawned a book, *Love over Gold*, which reached Number 4 in the charts; a compilation video; two CDs (£17.99 and £12.99) and the Alternative Euro 96 London film season (for the "soft at heart"). "We decided to advertise it like a soap and promote it like a television programme," says Jerry Green, creative director at McCann Erickson which created the campaign. "It's golden publicity for Gold Blend."

And now snack products. Following their success with Gary Lineker, Walker's Crisps has launched a new flavour: Salt 'n' Lineker. (Rumours of plans for a second - Tears 'n' Onion in honour of a subsequent ad featuring a weeping Gazza, remain unconfirmed.) Meanwhile, Golden Wonder has launched a range of merchandise and even a fan club based on the characters in the cur-

rent Pot Noodle campaign. "Our entire approach is for brands to provide an experience for the consumer in as many ways as we can," explains Steve Henry, a partner at HHCL, the agency behind the Pot Noodle ads. Each features a battle of wits between a character called Ned Noodle (who dresses up as a Pot Noodle) and Terry - a man from Pontypriod who campaigns against Pot Noodle's "fibrous lies".

So far, the range of Ned-inspired promotional products includes a wall clock (six Pot Noodle lids plus £7.99), fridge magnets (six lids plus £1.99), and a tea-towel (five lids plus £1.99). A bendy latex Ned will be launched in October. And Terry has his own club: the League Against Fibrous Lies, with a membership pack and campaign materials available to whoever writes in.



The hard sell (clockwise from above): Guinness ephemera; the Just Divorced hat championed by Debenhams; and Nicole in her sought-after frock



Pure Genius or hyped-up hops?

Guinness, as the old saying goes, is good for you. And for your bank balance too, it seems. A collection of Guinness advertising ephemera is expected to raise more than £50,000 when auctioned by Christie's next week, Wednesday September 11. Items for sale will range from a set of Carlton Ware Toucan lamps, each valued at £500, to cuff-links and Toucan wallpaper.

"The appeal is really very simple" Christie's spokeswoman Jill Potterton explains. "Individually, Guinness-ware is highly affordable. Overall, it is especially popular thanks to its design and the fact that advertising-ware in general is fast becoming a highly collectable area."

Creating hype to stimulate a cult following is one thing - witness the number of household products currently offering logo emblazoned "collectables" - but generating appeal that stands the test of time, for financial or nostalgic reasons, is quite another. Little Nineties ephemera will still be around in a year's time, let alone 50, believes Robert Opie who runs the History of Packaging Museum in Gloucester. Guinness' earliest appeal was built on illustrator John Gilroy's menagerie of Guinness-guzzling animals which appeared on posters in the Twenties and Thirties. Guinness then developed a range of memorabilia primarily for promotion in pubs - in the Forties and Fifties and it is many of these products which enjoy particular enduring appeal.

Although the company today manages a comprehensive merchandising operations with its own shop and visitor's heritage centre in Dublin, it has also moved with the times - latest spin-off products include a Guinness computer screen saver featuring the dancing man well-known from a recent cinema and TV advertising campaign.

Even so, the mass-produced approach invariably runs counter to attempts to manufacture a cult. And it lessens the potential for products to eventually become collectables, Opie says. "If too many items are produced, future desirability will be dampened by over-supply," he explains. And the questionable relevance and quality of many items lessens their long term appeal. "A book or video of the ad is little more than a promotional gimmick, and don't believe anyone who tells you anything else. It's here today, gone tomorrow."

Meg Carter

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travel south america

Never has a hammock been more perfectly slung

Tamsin Blanchard relaxed in Parati, a Brazilian haven of cobbled streets, fine food and old-fashioned charm.

Along with other horrendous tales circulating around the tourists of Rio de Janeiro, there is a story about a man who had his eyes stolen after being dragged while he slept. It may be one of those apocryphal stories designed to make visitors to the city feel jittery. But it works. It is possible to see the sights of Rio in 24 hours, and if that leaves you in need of a haven in which to recuperate, the ideal refuge is just a four hour bus ride away, on the lush Costa Verde between Rio and Sao Paulo. And, in particular, the town of Parati.

Parati has seen its fortunes rise and fall three times: once with the gold rush of the 18th century; second with the coffee boom of the 19th century, and third with the tourist explosion of the late 20th century. Now its glory days are once more on the wane, as Brazilian tourists are finding it cheaper to spend their holidays outside their home country, and even European and American tourists are not as plentiful since the Real was pegged to the dollar.

Out of season, in the winter months of May to September, the charming, roughly cobbled streets of Parati (locally known as *pes-de-moleque*, or street urchins' feet), are wonderfully free from both traffic and other holiday makers.

After a visit to the tourist information office, it becomes quickly apparent that there is very little to do in Parati but enjoy the beauty of the perfectly conserved Portuguese colonial architecture, go in search of local musicians strumming and drumming the sounds of samba and the more folksy *pagode*, and relax. Indeed, it is impossible with those ankle-twister cobbles to walk at anything but the pace of the sloths that sleep their lives away in the jungle forests of the Serra do Mar mountains that run along the coast. The town has been declared a heritage site by Unesco and is as far away from the commercial tourist tat of Rio as can be.

Parati is dependent on the sea, not least for its abundant catches of fish, but also for the cleaning of its streets. Twice a day, the tide rolls in and gently laps its way up the grid of narrow streets to wash away the day's dust and grime. At full moon, the tide runs right up the gridded car-free streets. Horses and carts, the most logical form of



Parati regained: A haven away from the wild streets of Rio

Photograph: Mark Doerfel

transport on the irregular cobbles, splash through the streets on their way around town.

The weather can be changeable in winter, and hotels and *pousadas* (both of which are plentiful and of a high quality, not least the Pousada do Ouro which boasts past guests including Mick Jagger and Tom Cruise) leave umbrellas in the rooms in case of rain.

When the sun shines, however, the best plan of action is to make your way to the wooden pier, so old and precarious, it is currently being rebuilt plank by plank. Schooners leave Parati at 11am and noon for trips around the nooks and crannies, storybook islands and golden sands of the bay. For 15 Reals (about £10) off season, and a good few Reals more in summer, you can join a five-hour boat trip that takes you to Vermelha or Lulas beaches.

Many of the other beaches are also only accessible by boat, like the dreamy lagoon just off the tiny Ilha dos Cocos where the schooners drop anchor to serve lunch of fried fish, rice and salad, with fish picked up from a fishing boat along the way. Our skipper threw banana chunks overboard to

attract the shoals of yellow-and-black striped fish that swim in the crystal clear, jade-green waters of the lagoon. Diving overboard into the warm, salty water is irresistible, and some boats carry goggles so that you can take a closer look at the fish.

Back at Parati, there is a small beach five minutes walk away from the old town if boarding a boat is too much effort. A few traders sell ice-cold bottles of guarana champagne (consumed like water in Brazil and tasting a little like dandelion and burdock) or even colder beer and fried fish. Not to be missed are *bolinhos de aipim e camarão*, fried balls of vegetable root paste with a delicious spicy shrimp filling in the middle.

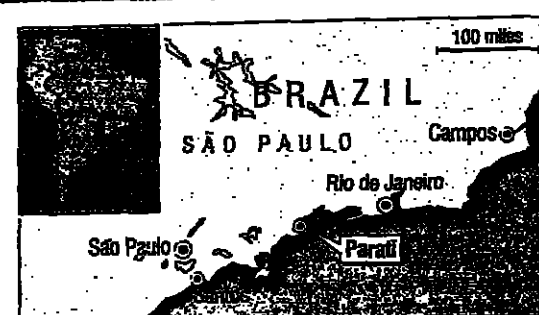
There are enough restaurants in Parati to keep the most ardent foodie happy for a month. If you are travelling off season, however, you might be the only customer in the place, which can be a little intimidating. Most of the restaurants have identical menus, with the emphasis on fish and seafood, cooked "a Brasileira" with tomatoes, coconut and aromatic oil.

One of the best of the restaurants for both atmosphere and food is the Hiltimho.

situated on Praça Matriz where the town's children gather at night to play hide and seek in the trees or basket and volleyball in the purpose-built court. After each meal, diners are offered a complimentary shot of one of the local liqueurs or *cachaça*. The waiters are prone to dipping into the complimentary supplies it seems, not to mention the *chopp* (draft beer) served at the bar. By the end of a long dinner, our waiter was positively leery.

If Parati is a haven, the Pousada Paradiiro on Rue Tenente Francisco Antonio is a veritable paradise within it. Never has a hammock been more perfectly slung than within the walls of the pousada's tasteful rooms which surrounded a garden where banana trees grow, caged birds sing, marimassets swing in the trees, and Frank Sinatra croons for the benefit of guests who want to swing gently in their hammocks in the shade near the pool.

It is not until you are safely cocooned in your hammock with a good book or an afternoon doze, that you have found the real Brazil. And in Parati, you don't have to worry about the possibility of eye thieves creeping closer while you sleep.



Getting there

There is considerable competition on flights to Rio de Janeiro between now and November. For example, Alitalia is offering a ticket from London to Rio via Rome for £503 including tax through Lupus Travel (0171-306 3000).

Tamsin Blanchard travelled by bus from Rio to Parati for £12 each way. In Parati, the Pousada Pardoiseo cost £65 per night double. These are off-season rates, and are likely to be higher during the southern hemisphere summer.

Further information

There is no Brazilian tourist office in Britain, but the the tourist information department of the Brazilian Embassy in London (0171-499 0877) may be able to help.

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Among the cowboys, mules and condors

Caroline Grayburn set off on horseback for an eight-day trek through the Andes



Mountaineering: Ascending the Andes on horseback, to reach the Argentine/Chile border.

Photograph: Ride World Wide

He had a face that had lived through many harsh seasons of snow and sun. Yet his agility belied his age. The ease with which those bow legs sprung him into the saddle put the rest of us to shame. Don Ramon, 70-year-old veteran of the mountains, patted his top pocket to check for precious cigarettes, clicked at his brown mare and with a cry of "hup, hup, mula mula!" was off, the pack mules trotting obediently after him, their loaded boxes swinging from side to side. Well into the route by now, we let them go on ahead, before falling into line behind Nigel, our English guide, careful to leave him the job of tearing down precarious-looking hillsides to head off any mules tempted away from the route by tufts of tasty grass.

It was four days since we'd left Santiago and only six since London, but we were, in every sense, a world away. Halfway through our eight-day ride into the Andes in Chile, heading to our top camp we caught our first

glimpse of Tupungatú - at over 21,000 feet, one of South America's highest mountains.

Tupungatú presides over the border between Argentina and Chile. Next day, we were hoping to get close to the top. We were seven in all, alone with our horses amongst these magnificent mountains, apart from the occasional huaso rounding up his cattle from the summer pastures. The route we were riding followed mule tracks first used by smugglers crossing the border, and since then only by these few cowboys, splendid figures in black felt hats, glistening spurs and thick ponchos, who thought nothing of riding down near-vertical slopes to gather in their stock.

Thankfully, we weren't expected to follow exactly in their hoofprints - although every now and again an astonished cry of "not that!" would slip out from whoever was nearest the front. "That" was usually a steep scree slope, criss-crossed by a barely visible path which, somehow, we were supposed to climb. None

too keen on heights, I tried not to think of the narrow ridges and steep precipices that might be ahead, absorbing instead the incredible views, watching condors glide against the snowy backdrop, picking out bands of red and blue in the rocks above my head and marvelling at the purple, pink and green hue of the mountains around me.

Having lived in Chile for several years, our guide rode like a huaso and attacked steep slopes in much the same way as they did. I was not totally convinced by his mutterings of "It's fine. Just hang on and leave it to your horse, after all, he doesn't want to fall any more than you do". However I had little option if I wanted to reach the border, so I wedged myself firmly in line between the others and put my faith in my horse, Espresso, and his acute sense of self preservation. The rough ascent was, of course, negotiated with ease, the horses even managing to snatch a few mouthfuls of grass on the way.

Born and bred in the mountains and

turned out to graze on these slopes when work allowed, they had spent their lives negotiating these steep hillsides in search of patches of sweet grass.

Each night we camped in a vega, a green oasis near a stream where there was good water and grazing for the horses. Once the horses were untacked and the mules relieved of their heavy burdens, we lit a fire for a welcome cup of tea and some delicious treat would appear from the bottom of one of the mules' boxes to keep us going until supper. With tents pitched for those who wanted, and beds skilfully made from layered tarpaulins, foam and sheepskins from the saddles, the brave among us would wander off for a dip in the stream; the more cowardly made do with a bowl of steaming water and promised themselves a proper bath the next day.

On the day of our final ascent we woke with the sun, and were encouraged out of bed by the smell of frying bacon, our routine unhurried in typical South American fashion.

Don Ramon and Marcello rounded up the horses whilst we ate a leisurely breakfast and then had time to perch on a rock with a book and revel in the morning sun as the horses were tacked up. Then Don Ramon, astride the smallest mule, led the way, following the edge of the stream that ran over the glacial moraine. Fresh puma tracks were our first excitement of the day. As we rode on, Tupungatú's peak towered above us. Puffs of smoke were visible from Tupungatú, its volcanic relation, and to our left, a glacier iced over the mountain side. The going was slow, horses and riders needing to rest more frequently as we climbed higher, and still higher, until at last we were above the snow line and over the top of the first ridge. Still full of energy despite the climb, the horses nervously eyed a barricade of snow, and row upon row of huge icicles blocking our path. At 16,000 feet, an hour or so later, we reached the final frontier: Argentina on one side, Chile on the other.

GETTING TO SOUTH AMERICA

As autumn sets in for the northern hemisphere, South America is warming up nicely. Anyone planning to visit the area over the Christmas period should book as soon as possible; availability is already poor.

Until the end of November, competition on fares is intense, especially to the more distant destinations of Buenos Aires, Montevideo and Santiago. The Colombian airline Avianca is planning to re-introduce direct flights from London to Bogotá after a gap of five years; at present, UK passengers are obliged to change planes in Paris or Frankfurt. Avianca (0990 767747) offers some of the lowest fares on the market for destinations in the south and west of South America, all connecting in Bogotá. The airline also sells cut-price airfares for travel within Colombia.

Lufthansa of Germany is discounting heavily on flights from Heathrow, Birmingham and Manchester to South America via Frankfurt. Bogotá and Caracas are priced at £456 (including tax), with Buenos Aires, Rio, São Paulo and Santiago all at £511 through Portland Travel (0171-631 0808). Specialist discount agents will be able to offer similar fares on a range of airlines. The Brazilian airline Transbrasil is expected to launch four flights a week between Gatwick and Rio in November. It is thought some of the flights may stop at either Fortaleza or Recife en route to and from Rio.

Health requirements for South America remain as complex as ever. Take Brazil: in his book *Stay Healthy Abroad* (£7.99), Rob Ryan recommends precautions against malaria, Yellow Fever, hepatitis A, typhoid, polio and tetanus, and suggests that protection against hepatitis B and meningitis should be considered. He warns of many other threats, like "Chagas" disease, caused by kissing or assassin bugs, common in rural areas.

Prospective travellers should read the book, and seek advice from a travel medicine specialist well ahead of departure. The Medical Advisory Service for Travellers Abroad (MASTA) issues a detailed health brief if you call a premium-rate number, 0891 224100. The South American specialist operator Journey Latin America (0181-742 3108) has begun to enforce regulations on travellers arriving without a Yellow Fever vaccination certificate. At present the ruling appears to be that visitors arriving either by air or land from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru must have this certificate, but JLA advises that "all travellers to Brazil, irrespective of point of origin, should have this certificate".

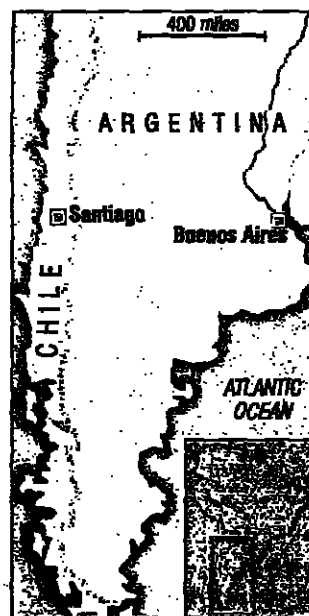
Caracas is the cheapest big city on earth for the travelling executive, according to the latest *Business Traveller* magazine (£2.90). The average daily living cost in the Venezuelan capital is £78 per day, based on a four-star

hotel. The survey also reveals that no large city in South America is as expensive as London. The priciest place on the continent is São Paulo (3 per cent cheaper than London), closely followed by Lima, Buenos Aires and Bogotá.

Rail services in South America are continuing to crumble, according to the new Thomas Cook Overseas *Timetable* (£8.40). Chilean railways in particular are being reduced: the editors report that "service south of Concepción has all but disappeared, and there is nothing advertised at all south of Puerto Varas - though a correspondent's daughter who has just visited the area assured us that service had actually resumed to the far south after the most disastrous earth movement for years."

The man who wrote the screenplay for *The Graduate* can be seen searching through the Andes and Patagonia for further inspiration in one of BBC2's *Great Railway Journeys*. Buck Henry's television trek across South America is due to be screened at 9.30pm on 25 September.

The 1997 edition of the *South American Handbook* is expected to be in the shops on the last day of September. The publisher has changed its name to Footprint Handbooks, but title and the format of the book remains much as it has for the past seven decades. The price for next year's edition is £21.99.



Chile on horseback

Caroline Grayburn paid £880 for an eight-day riding trip with Ride World Wide (0171-735 1144). The company has further trips organised in January and February next year, for which the typical cost is £930. This includes all riding, food, drink, camping equipment and transfers from Santiago, but not the air fare to Chile. At present Aerolineas Argentinas is selling flights for £528 (including tax) for a London-Santiago round trip, with a change of plane in Buenos Aires, through South American Experience: 0171-976 5511.

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Legend of Lubbock? That'll be the day

Robert Draper visits the town in Texas where, sixty years ago today, Buddy Holly was born. Peggy Sue still lives there

Inside Lubbock's Pancake House on Q Street, it is breakfast all day long, and the patrons who file in at all hours fall heavily into the wooden chairs as if to take root there. The folks are generally older, and they wear cotton shirts and jeans and blow steadily on their coffee while the steam rises to their brows. No one here is on a fast track; no one here is in a rush. Sophisticates have always snickered at Lubbock, Texas, where six-packs of beer aren't for sale and which, according to city officials, has more churches per capita than any other mid-sized city in America.

The man at my table, 70-year-old Larry Holley, says to the waitress bringing the coffeepot, "Better go and fill mine all the way up. I'm gonna need every drop." Larry has owned the Holley Tile Company for more than 40 years, though in the Sixties he nearly went bankrupt and had to go to work for his local competitor. Business is good now, he tells me. But it was never better, in a sense, than it was in the mid-Fifties, when Larry laid tiles while a Holley Tile employee - who happened to be his youngest brother, Charles, nicknamed Buddy - sat on the tile boxes and sang, strumming an acoustic guitar. "Nah, Buddy didn't do a whole lot of work, but I didn't mind," Larry says. "I just loved to hear him play."

Larry wasn't the only one. And after Buddy (along with fellow musicians Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper) was killed in a plane crash after taking off from the Mason City, Iowa, airport on 3 February 1959, at the age of 22, songwriter Don McLean depicted the tragedy 12 years later as "the day the music died".

But the music went on, and so did Larry, and so did Lubbock. In truth, Lubbock always went on with or without Buddy Holly (he dropped the 'e' in Holley for his stage name), the city's only world-famous native son. Two decades passed before city officials saw fit to erect a statue of the great musician. This seeming apathy has been a matter of considerable outrage among Holly fans, but one acquaintance of Buddy's suggests that Buddy would have had no hard feelings. "There's a stubbornness in Lubbock which Buddy himself had," says Peggy Sue Rackham, the woman immortalised in two Buddy Holly songs. "If they try to ram it down your throat here, you say no!"

Regardless, a sudden resurgence of Buddymania has taken place, and this time Lubbock is in the centre of it all. The city has purchased and put on show 156 pieces of Buddy's personal effects - ranging from his first Fender Stratocaster electric guitar to a notebook in which he crafted various lyrics. Though small, the exhibit is an affecting glimpse of the evolving genius of a small-town boy who became a towering influence on popular music. Lubbock

was not a music town, but it was certainly a place where relief from the all-encompassing flatness was welcome. As Sonny Curtis, one of Buddy's earliest bandmates, told me, "I used to drive the tractor on my dad's farm in Meadow, 30 miles down the road from Lubbock. You can think long thoughts sitting on top of that tractor, and dream long dreams."

What Buddy dreamed up was an amalgam of the hillbilly music he grew up with and the black music he tuned into in his parents' car most nights. Like every other kid in Lubbock, Buddy didn't know much about blacks because they weren't part of his world. Lubbock was then, and is now, a segregated town, a by-product of a 1928 ordinance that prohibited persons with more than one-tenth Negro blood from living west of Avenue D. But Buddy sure wanted to play the way the black musicians played on Shreveport's KWKH rhythm and blues radio programme. And if Lubbock did not thrust Buddy into the world of blacks, it certainly didn't stop him from ambling over to eastside clubs, where he and other young white musicians could waltz right in and lay eyes on the likes of Chuck Berry and Little Richard.

What his family, his hometown, and the radio didn't supply, Buddy found within himself. In effect, he set his own politely maverick personality to music. Lubbock would not have applauded an outright rebel: Buddy wasn't one. He went to church and was respectful to adults. He wasn't going to intimidate anyone with his noodly six-foot, 10-stone frame and the geeky glasses required by his 20/800 vision.

In February 1957, Buddy and his new band, the Crickets, drove a hundred miles north-west to Clovis, New Mexico. There, in the recording studio of songwriter and producer Norman Petty, the Crickets recorded "That'll Be the Day". Six months later, the single hit the charts, and Buddy Holly was on his way. Where he was going was uncharted territory. Petty dispatched the Crickets north-east, where they found themselves playing in black music venues to audiences who did not expect to see a quartet of Texas crackers onstage. Boos rang in Buddy's ears, and he knew an adjustment was in order. On the third night at New York's Apollo Theater, Buddy cranked up "Bo Diddley" and the crowd went berserk. By November, "That'll Be the Day" had topped the charts. "Peggy Sue" was ascending to number three and "Oh Boy!" was well on its way to cracking the top 10.

But Buddy still needed Lubbock. He and the band returned home for the 1957 Christmas season - arriving from the airport in a limousine and vaguely disappointed that his folks weren't home to greet him. Buddy found in Lubbock, a place where "he could be himself", maintains Larry. Around town he wore his T-shirts,

motorcycle boots, and jeans tapered tightly from crotch to ankle, courtesy of his mother. That the locals didn't mob him was in fact a comfort, as Peggy Sue Rackham recalls: "He would walk downtown and no one would intrude on his privacy. Creative people need that."

To north-west Texas, 1958 may have looked pretty much like 1957, but that year changes swept through Buddy Holly's life. The Crickets toured Australia and England, the second white rock and roll band (after Bill Haley and the Comets) those continents had yet seen. Buddy Holly was on a roll. In June, while visiting his music publisher in New York, he laid eyes on the company's ravishing Puerto Rican secretary, Maria Elena Santiago, asked her out that night, and proposed to her over dinner. In August the couple were married in the Holley home. While in Lubbock, Buddy and Maria walked into a local store, where she ordered an ice-cream cone. The waitress pretended not to hear her. Embarrassed, Buddy walked up to the counter and said politely, "I'd like an ice-cream cone." The waitress served him at once. He handed it to Maria, explaining quietly, "It's just the way things are around here."

From that moment on, it was on the cards that Buddy and his wife would not be making their home in Lubbock. They returned to Manhattan and Buddy began a solo career. Meanwhile, the remaining Crickets were going nowhere. On 3 February 1959 they finally called Maria in New York and asked her where they could reach Buddy. She looked on her schedule. "Clear Lake, Iowa," she said. They made the call to the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake, but the show was over. Buddy had left for Mason City airport. He was unreachable now.

Elsewhere in the world, he has become a legend, but in Lubbock memories are more down-to-earth. Like the night Buddy went fishing with his father and brothers near Ballinger. One evening around midnight, the Holleys drove up to a coffee shop where "That'll Be the Day" was playing on the jukebox. Mr Holley proudly announced to the waitress, "The fellow who's singing that song is sleeping outside in our pickup." When the waitress didn't believe him, the father walked outside and dragged his bleary-eyed youngest son back in with him. The waitress gave Buddy the once-over. Then she shook her head sceptically and walked away.

This is an edited version of an article that appeared in the October 1995 issue of *Texas Monthly*, published in Austin.

Lubbock is 300 miles west of Dallas, the closest city with flights from Britain. Both American Airlines and British Airways fly daily from Gatwick to Dallas.



Oh Boy - Lubbock's noodly, six-foot geek

On the trail of rock stars

By Tim Perry

From a windswept hill in south London to the gorgeous scenery of the Mojave desert, the rock fan can tour the world to see where icons had their last engagement on earth.

Dulwich, London, SE22: Bon Scott
Overhill Road climbs steeply up from the grassy fields of Dulwich Park. It was at the crest of this hill, opposite a grim block of flats, on a wintry night in January 1980 that AC/DC singer Bon Scott was left in a car to sleep off a drinking bout. The driver had been unable to stir the heavy-drinking Aussie and covered him with a thin blanket. When he came to check on him later that day he found no sign of life and rushed Scott to King's College Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Cotchford Farm, Hartfield, East Sussex: Brian Jones
Just outside the Ashdown Forest village of Hartfield, Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones was found dead at the bottom of his swimming pool. It was 2 July 1969. Jones had moved into the Queen Anne home just eight months before, but in May 1969 he had been thrown out of the band. On the night he died he had apparently drunk a lot - but he was a strong swimmer. Although the official cause of death was by misadventure, there has been much written about whether or not something more sinister happened that night.

Macclesfield, Cheshire: Ian Curtis
Number 77 Barton Street, an everyday two-up, two-down terraced house on a quiet road in Macclesfield, was where Joy Division's Ian Curtis hanged himself on 18 May 1980. This Manchester-based band, whose dark sound had created a cult following, had been due to fly out to the United States, but an increased touring schedule and exposure had evidently put too much pressure on their singer, who suffered from epileptic fits.

Out of this tragedy the band gained their biggest chart success with "Love Will Tear Us Apart" and then reformed as New Order, becoming one of Britain's biggest-selling Eighties bands.

Madison, Wisconsin: Otis Redding
Madison ranks as one of the most handsome college towns in the US. It stretches out on a hilly isthmus between two lakes - one of them Lake Monona, where a plane carrying soul superstar Otis Redding crashed in heavy fog on 10 December 1967. The 26-year-old, on his way to a gig in the city, was killed, as were all but one of his backing band. For the 20th anniversary of his death, fans raised funds for three marble benches in Law Park, which looks out over the lake. Wisconsin witnessed another rock'n'roll air tragedy 23 years later when blues guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan's plane smashed into a ski slope near East Troy.

Macon, Georgia: Duane Allman
Otis Redding's home town of Macon was where 24-year-old Duane Allman was killed when his motorcycle hit a truck on 29 October 1971. Further tragedy struck the Allman Brothers Band just over a year later, on 11 November 1972, when bassist Berry Oakley was killed in a motorcycle accident a few blocks away. Macon makes much of its musical heritage - others with roots here include James Brown and Little Richard.

Joshua Tree, California: Gram Parsons
A favourite break for rock stars holed up in Hollywood studios during the Sixties and Seventies was the Joshua Tree National Park, a surreal desert landscape strewn with the twisted trees that give it its name. A regular visitor was the country rock pioneer and ex-Byrds member Gram Parsons. Late on 19 September 1973 he was found in a drug-induced comatose state in a roadhouse. He died soon after in hospital.

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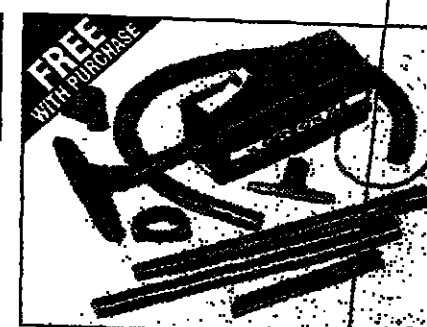
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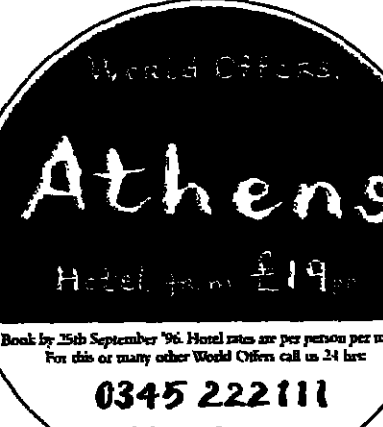
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Travel

When I go back, it will be because I have forgotten what silence sounds like — and for a decent pint of Guinness

Claire Gervat visits Inishmor, the largest of Ireland's three Aran Islands

The sea was a limpid teal-blue, glinting silver and gold in the sunlight. It was also cripplingly cold, which rather spoilt the illusion that this white, sandy beach was somewhere in the Mediterranean rather than off the west coast of Ireland.

That and the lack of noise. Because anyone who spends a few days on Inishmor, the largest of the three Aran Islands, will remember, above all, the silence, which locals refer to as "quietness without loneliness" (*ciúneas gan ualgheas*).

This may seem unlikely on an island that receives 3,000 visitors daily during the summer (the population of Inishmor is only about 900). But the place absorbs them well: they are trundled along the main road in minibuses to see the same top attractions, and only a field away the peace remains as unshattered as ever.

A lot of people hire bicycles to explore the island, though some of the back lanes are a bit rough and accidents are fairly common. If you have the time, walking is better for the soul. One morning I hitched a ride in a minibus of Belgians to Bun Gabhla, the last village to the west. The bus stopped there, but the lane continued down towards the shore and the lighthouse. As I walked along, the only sounds were birdsong, the muffled roar of the waves and my own footsteps. The air was so thick with the smell of the sea you could almost taste it.

There is barely a place on Inishmor from where you cannot see the ocean, on whose moods so much of island life used to depend. Fishing was once, and is again, a mainstay of the economy, although the traditional currachs (wood-framed canvas rowing boats that sit low in the water) have been replaced by larger, more modern vessels.

From the cliffs that make up the south side of the island, you can understand something of how terrifying and dangerous these waters can be. Even on a calm day, the waves hurl themselves with a roar at the foot of the cliffs. In winter, with a gale up, this bare limestone pavement must seem like the bleakest place on earth.

Which is why archaeologists are puzzled by the presence of two Iron Age forts perched on promontories along this inaccessible shore. Few visitors make it to Dun Duchathair (the Black Fort), in the south: more touristy and more accessible are the remains of the fort at Dun Aengus.

The pathway up to Dun Aengus is lined with puffin bushes and strewn with small groups of puffin tourists. The fort, itself, consists of three semi-circular walls on the edge of a sheer cliff and dates from around 1000BC, but it only really looks impressive from the air, a view that few people see — except on a postcard. The setting, however, makes up for everything, and anyone would find



Cross roads: the Aran Islands contain a wealth of Celtic memorials

Photograph: Steffen Hill

ARRIVING AT ARAN

The closest big airport to the Aran Islands is Galway, served by Aer Lingus (0181-899 4747) via Dublin. The lowest fare from various UK points (including Birmingham, Manchester and Stansted) is £114 return, including tax. More cheaply, AB Shannons (0345 464748), has three daily flights from Gatwick to nearby Shannon. The fare is £80 if you stay a Saturday and book a week ahead.

From Galway, there are three ways to reach Inishmor:
1. Ferry from Galway City at 10.30am (returning at 5pm), £18 return.
2. Bus (£4) to Rossaveal, then one of three daily ferries at 10.30am, 1.30pm and 6.30pm (£15).
3. Bus (£5) to Inverairfield and flight on Aer Aran (£35).

The Galway tourist office (00 353 91 563081) has a dedicated Aran Islands desk, and the lady who runs it is very helpful. In London, the Irish Tourist Board can be reached on 0171-493 3201.

the view from the place breathtaking — assuming they had any breath left after the climb. One elderly American was making his way painfully slowly along the path. "It's my 16th visit to Dun Aengus, and I've never made it to the top," he wheezed, his face a terrifying shade of scarlet. "But I'm determined to do it this time."

These American pilgrims who have come to see the old country must be disappointed to discover that all is not as they had expected. The way of life that J M Synge described in his 1907 book *The Aran Islands* has changed utterly. People have electricity, cars, satellite television; they run businesses renting out bicycles to tourists; there's a regular ferry and plane service, and you can even buy fresh coriander in the supermarket in Kilronan, for

heaven's sake. It is hard to regret the changes. Looking round, it seems incredible that people ever eked out a life for themselves on this wild and rocky island — though they have for 4,000 years or more. Each tiny field had to be made by hand: walled off with loose rock and laid with a mixture of seaweed, sand and the scrapings of soil from cracks in the limestone.

Without the changes, there would probably be no people living here at all. Sometimes, on the back roads, you could almost believe they have all vanished. One early evening on the lower road from Kilmorey to Kilronan, the only signs of life were a few tangled-coated goats on the hillside above and swans on the lake at Port Curragh. The roofless ruins of several small, simple churches,

dating from the 7th century or earlier, only added to the feeling that everyone had packed up and left.

There are other architectural sights well worth viewing on the island: the Seven Churches (*Na Seacht Teampall*), for instance, west of Kilmorey, are worth stopping at. There is also the *Clochan na Carrige*, a curious early Christian drystone beehive dwelling, like a stone igloo, once home to hermits, and the memorial stones along the main road east of Kilmorey, which features a sweeping white beach.

But when I go back to Inishmor, it will not be because there is another ruined church to see. It will be because I have forgotten what silence sounds like. And for a decent pint of Guinness.



SIMON CALDER

Tracked by the watchers in Astral Towers

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The company says it does not canvass business in this manner. If you are an Air Miles collector, though, it is worth bearing in mind that you are one of three million people on the company's database, and that your spending and travelling habits can be tracked precisely. It sounds like marketing heaven — or consumer hell.

Following our coverage of New Zealand a fortnight ago, an anonymous reader has sent in the front page from the *Otago Daily Times*, that he or she says "will confirm the prejudice that the country is living in the past".

A Boeing 737 was coming in for a normal landing at Dunedin airport, close to the second-largest city on the South Island. The

plane banked steeply when the pilot noticed that the airport lights were switched off and there was no one in the control tower. The Freedom Air jet, arriving from Brisbane, had to circle for half-an-hour until a controller reached the tower and put the proverbial dollar in the meter.

Question 1: if your train arrives more than an hour late, are you entitled to a refund? Question 2: if your delayed train arrives after public transport has shut down for the night, are you entitled to a taxi home? Question 3: if you happen to be travelling on InterCity West Coast, will the train company keep quiet about your entitlements? The answer to all

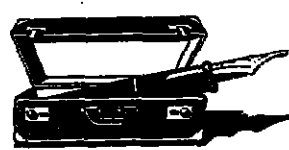
three is Yes.

Should this weekend find you travelling between Manchester and London, I commend the coach services of National Express. The price is less than half the train fare of £44.50, and the journey takes around four hours. The rail journey will take about the same. But during the train ride, you may be treated to a series of misrepresentations about the arrival time, and kept in the dark about your rights.

The last train from Manchester to London on Sunday night was packed out. It was due to arrive before 11pm. Although it was half-an-hour late departing, the guard assured passengers that it would arrive at 11.20pm. Even

when acceleration to warp factor 5 would not have been sufficient, he remained chirpily optimistic. In the event, the train dawdled in some time after midnight, when the last tube had long since retired for the night.

The sad details of the delay were relayed over the station's public address system, most of them heaping blame on to Railtrack. I listened expectantly for an announcement telling people that they were entitled to a refund after the nightmare trip, and to a taxi home. It never came. Those passengers who were battle-hardened enough to know the score, went and asked; all the rest, misinformed and mistreated, shelled out for taxis and vowed to travel by bus next time.



something to declare

Bargain of the week

The first bit of good news is that Holland Rail, the UK sales office for Dutch Railways, has acquired a new ticket printer that enables it to supply any ticket for travel within the Netherlands. The second bit is that this extends to the Benelux Ticket, a go-anywhere pass which is priced in a manner to encourage couples to travel together. The first person pays £80, and the second only £40. This covers unlimited rail travel within Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg on any five days in a month. Call 01962 773646.

A Likely Story

"To find an unspoiled country may seem impossible. But Myanmar, called Burma in the days of the Raj, is such a place" — *Wexas World Discoverers brochure*.

In January of this year I went to Burma to visit my relations. And I saw a side of the country usually hidden from visitors.

From next Friday, direct flights start from London to Rangoon on Royal Brunei. Anyone tempted to catch one should spare a thought for those lacking the diplomatic immunity of tourism.

At Rangoon (now Yangon) airport, we watched fellow tourists being cheerfully greeted

and waved through customs. But once it was clear that we were visiting family and not just sticking to the tourist attractions, we were forced to pay a bribe of US\$400 to get through customs.

Our movements were strictly monitored and a government-appointed guide openly followed us all week and even stayed in the same hotels as us as we travelled around Burma.

Our family was terrified of talking about the government to us. We asked them if they supported Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of Burma's democracy movement, and they all said they did. However, when we went to watch Suu Kyi speaking to her followers outside her house in

Yangon, only one member of our family would accompany us. The others were frightened of the very real threat of arrest — some of them had previously been in prison for supporting the opposition.

Although the members of my family were poor, they were very well educated. My female relations included a doctor, vet and economist. None of them could get work. Today it is difficult for professionals to find employment: the introduction of tourism has encouraged people highly qualified in other walks of life to work in hotels or as taxi-drivers instead.

Alexandra Cockburn

True or False?

"Ladies and gentlemen, please fasten your seat belts. We shall be landing at Heathrow airport in 15 minutes." Announcement by Japan Airlines stewardess last Monday afternoon.

False, although the announcement was not intended to mislead. Almost as soon as the stewardess had said it, the port wing dipped. The 747 then turned through 180 degrees and started heading directly back to Osaka. Had the pilot forgotten something which he was now returning to pick up? The passengers never discovered, since no reason for the about-turn was given.

The most likely explanation is that the approaches to Britain's busiest airport were congested, and that the Jumbo was instructed to fly back and forth across the Thames Estuary for some minutes before turning back for a second attempt. This, too, was thwarted and the residents of Barking in Essex were treated to a circuit from the Boeing.

The passengers were not just dizzy — they were confused. After all, the on-board computer had displayed the precise arrival time in the skies above London ever since the ground staff at Osaka had bowed respectfully and sent the aircraft on its way across Siberia. So surely a slot would have been allotted between all the short-hauls and shuttles for the long-heralded arrival of this flight from the Far East? Apparently not. So fuel gets consumed, and passengers get cross as they meander over Essex and their half-day hop extends towards evening.

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هَذَا من الأدلة

On a cruise along the Ouse

Wendy Berliner and her husband took their son and his friend for a day's boating around Bedford

The day out

The excursion was a chug along the River Great Ouse in Kingfisher, a white-and-blue motor cruiser hired from Priory Marina in Bedford. It involved navigating three locks on the way to Great Barford — and back again.

Once on board, life slows down. The sights and sounds of the town die away behind water meadows. The glassy, green river becomes seriously beautiful. With few other boats to disturb the stillness, and trees providing a natural canopy, you feel like you are on an English version of the *African Queen*. Kingfisher-blue dragon flies hover above rich green and golden yellow water lilies. Swans and ducks are joined by coots and moorhens as they push through the reeds. A heron flaps lazily across your bows. With the sun shining, life is rich and good.

The visitors

Jeff and Wendy Berliner, both journalists, took their 10-year-old son, Michael, and his friend, 11-year-old Sadie Chapman, on a cruise of the Ouse.

Michael: I've been out on boats before but this was my favourite trip because it was long and we got to go more places. It was fun unscrewing the locks to begin with but they did get pretty annoying. They took too much time. They should have more electronic ones.

One of the best bits was getting off at Great Barford and having a drink and a little wander around. At one point on the way back some of the ducks went crazy when I threw some bread for them. They chased after us, sometimes taking off and flying, then landing in a splash to get some bread.

I had a lovely time but whether another child would like it would depend on the child. It would have to be a person who was open minded and active and liked being outdoors. They would also have responsibilities because you have things you are in charge of like catching the rope or mooring — everyone has a job to do on a boat. It's not a sitting-still-playing-your-Game-Boy type of outing.

Sadie: I didn't think it would be so long yet it was quite fun and not boring at any time. But I wouldn't recommend it as a luxury trip. I think another child would like it as long as it was a sunny day. The locks are hard to get through. It takes a long time for the water to fill up the lock. The best bit was the picnic. It was lovely!

Jeff: Being on a boat like this is very relaxing and a great way to enjoy fresh air and wildlife. It would not suit very young children, and I would not be comfortable taking a child under seven.

Negotiating locks can be tricky. When you combine a large lock with a small boat and young children it can be potentially dangerous unless you are extremely attentive. You need at



Boat people: the Berliner family making waves in the motor cruiser, Kingfisher. Photograph: Keith Dobney

least two adults to help with opening and closing lock gates. It is certainly not the fun activity the brochures say it is.

Wendy: It was a great day out for all of us, rather like being on the Norfolk Broads but without all the other boats. We went on a weekday and there were very few other people about. I suppose it is busier at weekends.

The weather matters if you have the boat only for the day. I can imagine it getting pretty miserable cooped up with the canopy tightened down against the rain. We left booking until a couple of days before, when we knew the weather forecast was reasonable. The sun began to shine almost as soon as we set off and

by lunchtime it was really hot. Half way through the afternoon there was a dramatic thunderstorm but, because it didn't last long, it was cosy and fun to be chugging along with the canopy down for 40 minutes.

The novelty of the locks wore off on me very quickly. One, in particular, was very deep and a bit scary. It's rather like being in a large concrete coffin with water cascading in.

We took a picnic big enough to keep us going all day just in case we didn't get as far as Great Barford where there are pubs you can eat at. Also, you have to remember there may be no moorings left at the place you have in mind for your lunch. Remember, too, there are no toilets or washing facilities on a day boat.

The deal

Location: Priory Marina is in Bakers Lane, Bedford, which is off the A428 Goldington Road.

Cost: Boats are hired by the hour or by the day. Costs rise with the number in the group.

A party of two adults and two children would pay £41 for a day which begins at 9.30am and finishes at 5.30pm.

"Good value considering what you might pay in a theme park," says Wendy.

If you only want a taster of life afloat, the same sized party would pay £8 for an hour.

Deposit: a £50 returnable cheque is payable in case of late return or if there is any damage to the boat. Life jackets are provided.

For further details ring Priory Marina on 01234 351931. Access: There is no wheelchair access to the boats.

Food: Take your own. Toilets and washing facilities: Onshore only.

A weekly round-up of outings for children

'ARE WE NEARLY THERE?'

Steam trains

This is the acceptable face of railway privatisation. For a start, there are no fat cats or Fat Controllers. Unlike Railtrack, the little trains of the railway preservation societies are run as a labour of love. But in recommending that you catch them, I cannot be held responsible for closure, cancellation or the wrong kind of tourist on the track. Further details in *Railways Restored*, edited by Alan C Butcher (£9.99, Ian Allan).

Ravenglass & Eskdale (01229 717171). Main station: Ravenglass, Cumbria. Known as "Ratty" to its friends, this narrow gauge railway was built for iron ore mines and now chugs from the coast via Muncaster Mill to its terminus just short of the village of Boot. Its seven-mile route makes an excellent way to explore this part of the north-west Lake District.

Great Central Railway (01509 230726). Main stations: Loughborough Central, Leicester North. Its eight miles, which cross Swithland Reservoir, have the sad distinction of being the surviving portion of the last mainline built in Britain. Hot meals on most services.

Bluebell (01825 723777). Main station and museum: Sheffield Park, East Sussex. There are nine miles of the first standard gauge line to be adopted by the amateur wheel-tappers. The old posters and signs give its stations the feel of a timewarp and at Horsted Keynes there's a Brief-Encounter-style buffet.

Valley of Rheidol (01970 625819). Main station: Aberystwyth, Dyfed. These 12 miles of narrow gauge reach views that cars can't touch. Get off at Devil's Bridge for walks to Mynach Falls and Devil's Punch Bowl.

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch (01797 362553). Main station: New Romney, Kent. A one-third-size miniature railway, the longest (over 13 miles) and best equipped 15in gauge in world. Carries not just families on outings but real people going about their business.

Lappa Valley (01872 510317). Main station: Benny Halt, near St Newlyn East, Newquay, Cornwall. The Steam Railway opened in 1849 for a local tin mine, was incorporated into Great Western Railway line, was axed (of course) in 1963 and reopened in 1974 as a narrow gauge line. It is the only way to reach the mine's old

engine house and (several free) attractions, such as boating lake and maze, at the small un-themed park. Recent additions: a nature trail and an even narrow gauge branch line.

Bo'ness & Keneil (01506 822298). Main station: Bo'ness, West Lothian. Based in a reconstructed Victorian station, this runs 3.5 miles. The headquarters of the Scottish Railway Preservation Society has an exhibition hall with a fleet of locos.

Mull (01680 812494). Only 1.25 miles but there isn't a great deal of room on the Isle of Mull anyway. First island railway in Scotland, this 10in gauge line runs to Torosay Castle with 12 acres of gardens and spectacular views of sea and mountains.

Ffestiniog (01766 512340). Main stations: Porthmadog, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd. One of the big names in small-time railways, this started in the slate business and now lugs passengers over 13 miles of 2ft gauge track. Anoraks enthuse over the locos, some of which date back to Victorian times. The rest of us enthuse over the views as the train claws its way up above Porthmadog.

Severn Valley (01299 403816). Main stations: Bridgnorth, Bewdley, Kidderminster Town, Worcs. Boasts more mainline engines than any other preserved railway. Connects with BR at Kidderminster and through-tickets are available from all manned BR stations (a luxury that may not be widespread between different BR companies after privatisation). Over 16 miles of track, used by both steam and diesel. Special events with slightly embarrassing names like "Thomas the Tank Engine weekends".

Nene Valley (01780 782854). Main station: Wansford, Cambridgeshire. As seen in roll-on parts in films like *Goldengate* and TV shows like *Hammy*, and soft drinks commercials. Locos and coaches from 10 countries, so Cambridgeshire scenery stands in for Spain, Russia and Anywhereville. Also has a travelling Post Office.

North Yorkshire Moors (01751 472508). Main station: Pickering. Runs 18 miles through North York Moors National Park. Impressive collection of mainline locos with names like Blue Peter and Dame Vera Lynn.

Jonathan Sale

How do you know a jockey isn't overweight? Who polishes fire engines?

Find out during next weekend's Heritage Open Day. By Lesley Gillilan

On an average day, Northampton would not seem the most alluring of destinations for adult sightseers, let alone children. But the place is really pushing the boat out for next weekend's free-for-all Heritage Open Days.

In the spirit of the nationwide event, the city plans to share a few of its hidden secrets by unlocking dozens of doors that are normally closed to the public. And among its list of offerings are one-off, open invitations to step behind the scenes of a still-active 1930s, five-bay fire station, inside the cells at the local nick — where police officers will show you what it means to get banged up for the night — and into the shoes of the council employees whose job is to "monitor and optimise traffic movement".

Northampton's Traffic Control Centre — opened in 1977 and housed in a computerised suite over the city's Greyfriars Bus Station — was one of the first in the country and, according to regional Open Days coordinator Bob Leathersmith, it is standard to most centres of its type. So what, pray, will visitors see? Cameras, roadside detectors, on-screen images of traffic flowing through Northampton.

"Everyday, thousands of people queue for buses just below the control centre, but very few of them know it exists, what goes on inside and how it contributes to the community," says Mr Leathersmith. This may not be enough to persuade you make a family outing to Northampton, but it puts the aims of the Heritage Open Days scheme in a nutshell. And although there may not be a traffic control centre open near you, there's bound to be something just as enlightening.

Staff at Derbyshire's Ambulance Control Centre, for example, are planning to show how 999 calls are handled. (The award-winning centre is one of only five International Centres of Excellence in Emergency Medical Dispatch in the world). In Swindon, visitors will be allowed into the Renault Distribution Centre, designed by Norman Foster and used as a location for the James Bond movie *A View to a Kill*. And in Ely in Suffolk, there are to be tours of the two-year-old Fibropower Power Station — where the energy to heat and light 12,000 homes is generated by the messy (but organic) by-products of 100,000 chickens.

The indoor equivalent of the National Garden Scheme, Heritage Open Days — a two-day annual event, organised by the Civic Trust, funded by the Department of Heritage and now in its third year — provides free access to thousands of buildings



Prize possession: the Martell Grand National Trophy, won at Aintree every year

which are usually off-limits to the public or are normally open for a fee. Confusingly, the scheme's London arm is called Open House, the Scottish equivalent is called Doors Open Days and each local authority seems to have its own agenda.

Last year, 4,000 people toured the Britannia Naval College in Devon. The massive airship hangars at Cardington in Bedfordshire received 9,000 visitors. And thousands more took the opportunity to step inside Her Majesty's Prison, at Hewell Grange in Redditch, Worcestershire. Inmates were pressed into showing groups of sightseers around their low-security home but, according to a Civic Trust spokesperson, the prison is not opening this year due to "the deteriorating quality of prisoners". Never mind, plenty more of life's inside stories will be told next weekend.

Whether that means touring a steel furnace in Derwentcote, a lighthouse in Whitley Bay, a Leech house (18th century storage for blood-letting medicinal leeches) in Bedale, or a Land Drainage Pumping station in Spalding, is largely down to personal preference — or a matter of being in the right place.

For those with an interest in sport, there will be a public airing of the private parts of Gateshead International Stadium, the Victoria Football Ground in Northwich (dating from the 19th century and considered to be the world's oldest ground), the Aintree Racecourse in Liverpool (highlights include the weighing room and Red Rum's grave) and Bisham Abbey National Sports

Centre in Marlow — where England's Euro '96 soccer team were trained.

It pays to read the small print, and that's true of all the Open Day events. The North West Film Archive in Manchester and the Royal Opera House in London, are among a number of centres that are open by appointment only. Many more are open for only a few hours or just for one of the two days. So check details (see below) before setting out on any voyage of discovery.

Meanwhile, back in Northampton, the staff at Mounts Fire Station are setting up a display of gleaming red engines and fire-fighting equipment. At the Northamptonshire Police Headquarters, they are preparing a few "fun events" around the custody office. And if that's not enough to whet the appetite, the city is also offering backstage tours of the 1880s Royal Theatre and peeks inside the prayer hall of the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Sikh temple. You can also get around for free on a vintage. Northampton Transport bus. No doubt, you'll be able to spot them on the monitors at the Traffic Control Centre.

For full details of the nationwide event contact: Heritage Open Days (England) on 0891 800603; Open House (London) on 0891 600061; Doors Open Days (Scotland) on 0141 221 1466; European Heritage Open Days (Wales) on 01222 484606; Heritage Open Days (Northern Ireland) on 01232 235254. Local lists of Open Day attractions are available from Tourist Information Centres.

Next lot: Police station, one careful owner

It's the year of the sell-off. The Met, the MOD, National Health Trusts and British Rail all have property on the market. Mary Wilson finds out who is profiting

Michael Heseltine was in trouble last month for selling his constituency headquarters to McDonald's - who employed an old friend of his, Geoffrey Tucker, as consultant. He has also been embroiled in the controversy over the sale of the Ministry of Defence's married quarters.

Earlier this week Annington Homes (a consortium that includes the Japanese bank Nomura and the construction group Amec) was announced the preferred bidder in a project described as the housing sale of the century. The £1.6bn sale of 57,700 MOD flats and houses in England and Wales is expected to provoke political outcry. Once the sale has gone through, the MOD will immediately lease back most of the homes, which it needs for operational use. But 2,700 properties will be surplus to requirement and these will be sold freehold for refurbishment and re-sale.

It is the year of the sell-off. All government departments are being encouraged to get rid of empty homes. The Ministry of Defence is also selling development land, old redundant training grounds, air force and army barracks as a result of the peace dividend, with advertisements for these going weekly into the trade press. Private schools, which have seen a sharp decline in attendance and therefore their life blood, are also having a selling spree.

Allsop, the auctioneers, has been handling property on behalf of the Metropolitan Police for some while. Much of this consists of unwanted hostels, training centres, the occasional police station and surplus policemen's houses. "We have been retained for three years," says Gary Murphy, chief

of the company. "These are good properties and are fairly priced." The company will also be auctioning surplus British Rail stock at a special auction at The Berkeley hotel in central London on 24 October. "We'll have about 60 lots with everything from old station houses, to yards, a pub, lavatories and even a watercress site - all were bringing in no income."

Who benefits from all this? The year of the sell-off means good news for developers. Many of the units will be eagerly snapped up by companies who will refurbish and turn them into dwellings, selling some at a premium to the private market, others as social housing.

At RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, 1,250 acres of redundant MOD land is currently being fought over for development. Wimpey, Taylor Woodrow and Westbury Homes have formed a consortium to build 5,000 homes and they plan to create "an innovative sustainable new settlement, midway between London and Birmingham, where cyclists and pedestrians take precedence and public transport takes priority over the private car."

A laudable plan if it ever gets off the ground, but the local residents are up in arms, worried about the number of homes planned to be built, and the increased traffic. Yet it has been projected that an additional 12,000 homes will be needed in Oxfordshire by the year 2011 and Upper Heyford will go a long way to supplying that.

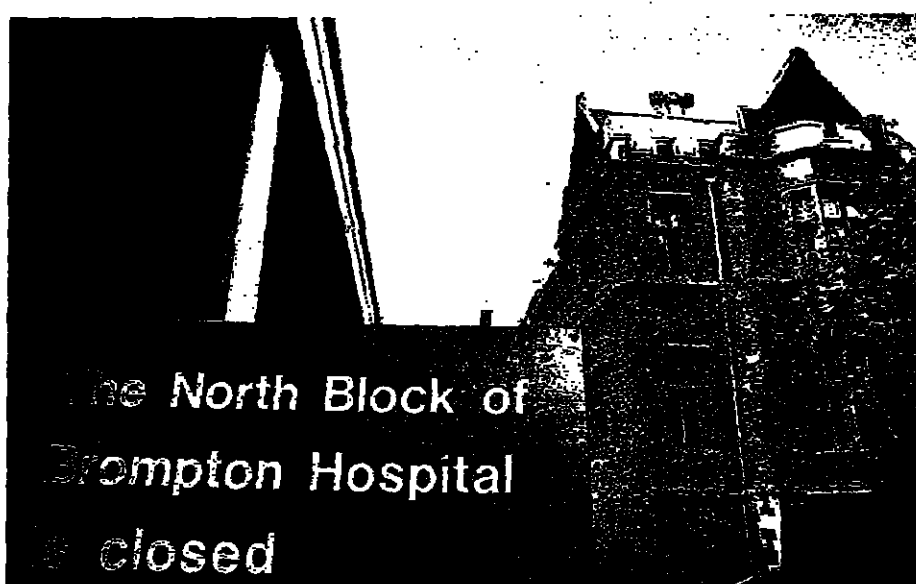
Other major landlords who have been selling off property hand over fist are the National Health Trusts. Nursing homes and old hospitals come up for sale on a regular basis, again mainly snapped up by developers who see a chance to make money by converting them into

luxury flats or houses. In London, the New End Hospital in Hampstead is being developed by Berkeley Homes (North London) and also in Hampstead, Westfield, the former ladies' college has been bought by LCR Developments. The company is restoring, re-building and adding new homes all around the existing, but newly landscaped, gardens.

Berkeley (Thames Valley) is working with Thames Water on a development, Barnes Waterside, on a site beside four reservoirs, which are now redundant because of the new London ring main. The reservoirs are being re-flooded and the adjoining land made into London's first waterfowl and wetlands centre.

Thames Water is also joining forces with Berkeley Homes (Kent) to create another company, Kennet Properties, which will develop its unwanted buildings. The first of these is the magnificent New Riverhead building, which used to be its head office, in Rosebery Avenue, London EC1.

Northacre, the developer of the superb reconstruction of Observatory Gardens in Kensington, London W8, has purchased the north side of the former Royal Brompton Hospital, South Kensington, which will be turned into a residential site. Northacre's section should be ready for occupation early 1998. It is a grand project, and helps to put a positive light on this selling fever. Rather than see fine buildings lie derelict because there is no commercial use for them, or tied homes of ex-personnel remaining vacant, they are being scooped up by residential developers, who are providing employment as well as a valuable end product - much needed housing stock.



Buying bonanza: top, the Waterside development, Barnes, where work by Berkeley (Thames Valley) and Thames Water has started. Left, the north side of the former Royal Brompton Hospital, bought for redevelopment by Northacre

Photographs: Tony Buckingham

Swings and roundabouts - how safe are children's garden playthings?

Josie Barnard reports on a campaign for better standards over the installation of outdoor equipment

Growing concerns about the potential danger of children's swings and slides in the garden could have a knock-on effect on the value of a property. If you install children's play equipment using concrete foundations and meeting national safety standards, as opposed to just plunking it all on the grass, you will almost certainly increase the value of your children's leisure time. You may also increase the saleability of your home. And you will be supporting the crusade of people including Peter Heseltine and Michelle Hooper.

"Pubs and playgrounds have to meet either the BS5696 British safety standard or the DIN7926 German safety standard," says Peter Heseltine of the Royal Society for the Prevention of

Accidents (ROSPA), "but when it comes to domestic installations all parents can look to is the current toy standard BS5665. It is being updated, but frankly it's piffling as far as outdoor equipment is concerned."

Is the government unconcerned because domestic swings and slides are generally safe? Peter Heseltine says that this is not the case. "The standards of equipment produced varies wildly from acceptable to dangerous." In the absence of legal requirements, he is currently working with the Child Accident Prevention Trust to put together guidelines. But what should parents do in the meantime?

Michelle Hooper is the Environmental Health Officer for East Dorset

District Council. She is pioneering workshops for childminders and parents. As well as looking around and checking that you are not installing your swing bang in front of an oak, think about the age range of children who will be using the equipment, she advises. Will toddlers be running into danger? She suggests drawing up a list of questions. For example, if the item is steel, is it galvanised (ie strong and weather resistant)? Does the "Critical Fall Height" meet the British Standards' requirement for the particular age of your child? The manufacturer's answers will help you assess their competence and trustworthiness.

Alternatively, you can get hold of the BS5696 or DIN7926 safety standards

from your local library and adapt them for home use. They will tell you how to calculate safe distances for swings and climbing frames from static objects. You can also phone ROSPA for advice.

ROSPA statistics show that 30 per cent of playground accidents result from site design and a further 30 per cent from equipment design. If you design your own play area and choose your own equipment you could drastically reduce the risk of accidents for your children.

But what happens when you want to sell your house? A safe play area might increase saleability, but only to a certain type of buyer. Ian Davis, regional director for the Black Horse Agency, says

that even if official safety standards are met, their agency would be extremely unlikely to mention a play area in the property's specifications. "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," he says. "One buyer might pay a premium for a play area. Another might look for a discount to cover the cost of dismantling it."

This, though, need not be expensive. Chris Vallender of TP Activity Toys explains. "The frames of our equipment aren't secured in the concrete, just the stakes, so when you decide to move on you simply leave the stakes where they are, remove the frame, grass over the concrete and your lawn's as good as new." He says that although the idea of proper foundations is off-putting and it is a "bit of a bore" to put them in, it is

not a difficult operation "especially now you can buy ready-mixed concrete from DIY stores and borrow tools on a day-hire basis".

As for Black Horse's Ian Davis, did he install his four kids' climbing frame properly? Yes, he did indeed roll up his shirt sleeves and get out a bag of concrete. "When it comes to climbing frames and swings, parents think of the value of their children's development and play activity."

ROSPR 0121 248 2000; National Playing Fields Association 0171-584 6445; TP Activity Toys are at branches of John Lewis, or you can phone them direct on 01299 827 028

Hotel breaks with THE INDEPENDENT

2 nights for the price of 1

The Independent and the Independent on Sunday would like to invite you to take a hotel break and enjoy two nights for the price of one.

Simply pay for one night's bed and breakfast and you will get the next night, including breakfast, free. Prices are based on two people sharing a double or twin room.

All the participating hotels are members of the Minotel consortium and many will allow you to enjoy a longer stay on the same basis; pay for two nights and stay for four, for example. You can check this with your chosen hotel when you make your initial reservation.

There are more than 60 Minotel hotels participating in this offer, all of which are located in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. All the hotels offer top-class comfort and pride themselves on providing a personal service that many larger establishments cannot match. In The Independent on Friday 13 September we will print a list of all the participating Minotel hotels with a brief description of each.

Pictured today is Brandon House Hotel in Brandon, Suffolk. This Georgian hotel is located on the edge of a market town and is ideal for exploring East Anglia. A double room for one night costs £65.

How to Qualify

To qualify for your 2 for 1 break, you must collect three differently numbered tokens from the seven we are printing in The Independent and the Independent on Sunday and attach them to a voucher which we will print in The Independent on Thursday 12 September. When you have three tokens plus the voucher, follow the booking procedure detailed on this page. Today we print Token 1; Token 2 will be printed in tomorrow's Independent on Sunday.



Terms and Conditions

1. To participate in our 2 for 1 offer you must collect 3 differently numbered tokens and attach them to a voucher which will be printed on Thursday 12 September along with a confirmation booking form.
2. The voucher may be redeemed at any participating Minotel hotel (from the hotel list printed in The Independent on Friday 13 September) for one free night's bed and breakfast for two people in a standard twin or double bedded room when the first night's bed and breakfast is pre-purchased at the price indicated.
3. Some hotels, at the proprietor's discretion, will accept the voucher for longer stays on the same basis, so you can stay for 4 nights for the price of 2 for example. Please check with your chosen hotel when making your booking.
4. The voucher does not cover payment for any other meals or service that may be requested by the holder and cannot be used with any other offer, saving or discount that may be available at the hotel.
5. One child, under the age of 12 years at the time of booking and sharing a room with two adults will be accommodated free of charge but all meals, including breakfast, will be chargeable.
6. The descriptions and prices contained in this offer have been supplied by participating hotels. While every effort has been made to ensure their accuracy prior to publication, no responsibility can be taken by Newspaper Publishing plc, Charterhouse Promotions or Minotel for any error, omissions or changes that may take place afterwards without notice.
7. No bookings will be accepted for Bank Holiday periods.
8. All bookings must be made no more than six weeks in advance of your proposed date of arrival.
9. Vouchers are valid until 30 April 1997.
10. Vouchers must be surrendered on arrival at the hotel and can be used on one occasion only.
11. Photocopies of tokens and vouchers are not acceptable.

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1. All bookings must be made by telephone direct with each individual hotel. Callers must identify themselves as "Independent 2 for 1 voucher holders" as some hotels may have standard or superior rooms available at normal rates when their allocation of 2 for 1 rooms is full.
2. All bookings must be pre-paid and reservations can be confirmed over the telephone by credit card holders at most hotels.
3. Voucher holders wishing to pay by other methods can make a provisional booking by phone which the hotel will keep open for 48 hours pending receipt of the confirmation booking form and payment which will be acknowledged by the hotel on the day it is received. If you do not receive such an acknowledgement within seven days, you are advised to contact the hotel.
4. No-shows or cancellations less than 14 days prior to the anticipated date of arrival at the hotel will render the voucher invalid and the holder liable for payment in full for each night booked, including those previously offered free.
5. All bookings made under this promotion are subject to availability and to the selected hotel's own terms and conditions, except where those conditions may differ from these in which case these conditions shall prevail.



Many investors do not realise how growing competition is radically transforming the way the fund management business is run

What are the lessons of this week's Morgan Grenfell affair? As with all such scandals, the full story of what went wrong – prompting the regulators to move in and suspend three of its unit trusts – has yet to emerge. But it is clear already that it is bound to lead to some tightening of the rules governing how unit trusts are managed and regulated. It has also brought into stark relief the problems which the fund management business is creating for itself with its growing, dangerous obsession with short-term performance.

It is not entirely a coincidence that Morgan Grenfell's problems should stem from its best performing unit trust. Its European Growth fund was not only the biggest fund its unit trust division managed, but also its most successful. It attracted a huge following, precisely because its record appeared so good.

In the five years to the end of last year, it was ranked as the best performer out of more than 110 unit trusts investing in the European sector – by a remarkable margin. £100 invested would have nearly doubled in that time. None of its rivals managed more than 50 per cent growth over the same period.

What the investigation at Morgan Grenfell is about is how it achieved that record. Peter Young, the 38-year-old high-flier who took over the running of the fund two years



JONATHAN DAVIS INVESTMENTS

ago, had managed to keep his place at the top of the performance rankings, but only – so it now appears – by adopting a high-risk and possibly illegal investment strategy. In apparent breach of the regulations governing how unit trusts may invest, his fund had at one point more than a quarter of its assets in unlisted securities, many in obscure Scandinavian companies. Unlike quoted shares, where the market price is always available, there is obvious scope for manipulation of the valuation of unlisted shares – which is why unit trusts are not normally allowed to have more than 10 per cent of

their assets in unquoted shares. The implication of course is that the fund's performance may not have been quite as good as it had been made out to be.

Just as pertinent is the question of how Mr Young was investing his funds. The published list of his main holdings shows that he was adopting a high-risk strategy, investing heavily in speculative technology stocks and second-tier markets like Norway. This may or may not have been the most appropriate investment strategy; but for a mainstream unit trust, sold to 90,000 individuals, it appears unlikely. Most investors, one suspects, were sold the trust on the basis of its track record without enquiring too closely how it had been achieved.

Now we are finding out – and it should not be entirely a surprise that it seems to have been achieved through a distinctly high-risk approach. The sharp fall in European Growth's asset value this year, prompted by the falling value of several of its larger holdings, had already begun to expose the dangers in Mr Young's strategy.

Many ordinary investors probably do not realise how growing competition is radically transforming the way that the fund management business is run. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that it is creating dangerous conflicts of interest in the process. Unit trusts had

sales last year of £18bn. More than £110bn of investors' money is now held in this form, compared to just £20bn 10 years ago. If you assume an average annual management fee of 1 per cent – and many funds charge more – we are looking at a business which generates something like £1bn a year in annual income for those who manage the funds, as well as hundreds of millions of pounds in commissions for those who sell them.

Morgan Grenfell itself only entered the business in 1988 – ironically, partly as a way of restoring its tarnished reputation after its involvement in the Guinness affair three years previously. It has since grown to be the seventh largest unit trust manager and one of the big five in pension fund management. European Growth alone accounted for 40 per cent of its unit trust funds under management.

One of the consequences of the industry's rapid growth has been the emergence of a cult of performance in which fund managers are deemed to be in a permanent state of competition against their rivals. As nothing helps to sell a unit trust more than a good track record, anyone who can put together a string of good performances is guaranteed to become a star – and be rewarded accordingly.

As a result, fund managers who can deliver above-average performance in their particular sectors are able to command high

salaries and even transfer fees when they move – as they do increasingly – from one fund management house to another.

Whereas 10 years ago, fund management was still regarded as something of a backwater in City career terms, now it is one of the first places that ambitious young Turks head to try and make their name.

The turnover in the business is absurdly high: 50 per cent of fund managers in the unit trust business have been managing that particular fund for two years or less. Many manage several different funds at the same time. It is a high-stress, high-reward business. Nobody should be surprised if somewhere along the line the interests of the investor become subordinated to the interests of the fund managers themselves.

The moral for investors from this episode seems clear. It always pays to enquire where apparently superior performance comes from. Make sure that the funds you are buying are appropriate for the objectives you have as an investor. And don't assume that just because a fund is managed by an apparently famous and reputable house, it is immune from things going wrong. The sad lesson of recent events – from the Barings collapse to last month's announcement of a heavy fine for Jardine Fleming in Hong Kong – is that this conclusion can no longer safely be drawn.

India emerges as an investment favourite

Entrepreneurial and shareholding traditions even extend to selling unit trusts in maternity wards. By Alison Eadie

India has proved to be one of the more popular emerging markets so far this year. The combination of cheap valuations, by comparison with other Asian stock markets and by its own historical standards, plus the potential of a population of 870 million enjoying rising living standards has proved irresistible to fund managers.

Since January, some \$300m of new money has been pouring into India each month. Funds have been launched by Guinness Flight (0171-522 2100) and Kleinwort Benson (0171-623 8000) for private investors, by Abtrust for professional investors and by Threadneedle Asset Management and Templeton for domestic Indian investors.

The burgeoning middle class – there are some 200 million people with professional skills and an entrepreneurial tradition – gives India ballast against the fickle flows of foreign capital which have destabilised other emerging markets. With a savings rate well above 20 per cent of GDP, India has strengths that even China lacks.

The two are often compared because of their size, vast potential consumer markets and recent economic reforms. But India has been open to the West longer, is more industrialised, democratic, has an English-

speaking heritage, a bigger middle class, and a tradition of equity investment with 15 million direct shareholders. Even the goody bags handed to new mothers in Bombay hospitals contain application forms for The Unit Trust of India, the world's largest unit trust.

Indian stock markets – there are 23 stock exchanges – took this summer's general election in their stride. Kenneth King, director of Kleinwort Benson Investment Management, says the decision by the coalition United Front government to continue market-oriented policies proves the compelling logic of what India is doing.

Ashwani Mathur, assistant investment manager with Guinness Flight, says politically India is pretty safe. Economically, the long-term story is also good, according to Vivek Sekhar, fund manager with Fleming. Real GDP growth is forecast at 6.5 per cent this year and 6.3 per cent next. Mr Sekhar expects a cut in interest rates in the next six months, which will help smaller companies and boost production. The fiscal deficit should be kept under control by further privatisations.

The recent budget encouraged foreign investment and import tariff and duty cuts. What is needed is a revival of domestic stock market interest to generate more excitement.

Earnings multiples at 12 times this year's earnings and 10 times next year's are well below the historic averages of around 20. Investors are spoiled for choice, which presents both opportunities and dangers. India has nearly 8,000 quoted companies, but quality is variable.

Hugh Young, managing director of Abtrust in Singapore, says the size and diversity of the market create dramatic mispricings, but the only way to benefit is to conduct exhaustive first-hand research and never rely on third-party research. Mr Sekhar covers the top 200 blue chip companies, which he says give the required exposure to the economy and top class management.

As always, fund managers differ in their assessments. Fleming, Morgan Stanley, Fidelity and Kleinwort are overweight in India compared with the IFCG Composite Index of emerging markets. Mercury and Templeton are underweight.

Ewen Cameron Watt, Mercury's head of emerging markets, blames prolonged settlement delays and registration problems. Although there is the option of buying in London via Global Depository Receipts, the premiums can range up to 35 per cent.

Mercury's answer is to take good-sized

stakes in a few carefully researched Indian companies. Its global emerging markets fund currently lists the Steel Authority of India and the Morgan Stanley India Investment Fund among its top 10 holdings. Mr King considers the recent volatility of premiums has created excellent arbitrage opportunities between domestic stocks and GDRs. The local trade must be executed first, he says, adding that he has never found domestic settlement to be a significant problem.

Investors wanting pure exposure can go for offshore open-ended funds like Guinness Flight's Madras Indian Equity Fund (minimum subscription £3,500) or Kleinwort's India Fund (minimum £3,000) or for London-listed investment trusts like Fleming India or Lazard Birla India.

Others can pick from an array of regional or global funds. Schroders' new Emerging Countries investment trust intends to devote more than half its assets to Asia, the largest initial investments in India and Malaysia.

Much will depend on the ability of the fund manager to pick the right stocks. According to the enthusiastic Mr Young, "India could be the jewel of an investor's portfolio. In terms of potential, the surface has hardly been scratched."



A jewel in the portfolio: Home to the world's largest unit trust, with 23 stock exchanges, India is proving irresistible to many fund managers

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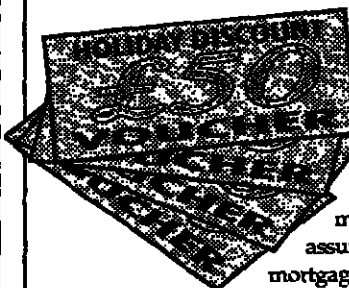


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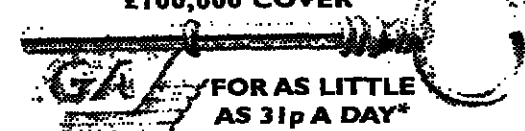
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They wanted half a million. It sounded like fun. But my golf dream ended up in a bunker

A mail-order millionaire tells Corinne Simcock about his biggest mistake

Nigel Swaby, 47, is chief executive of Scots of Stow, the mail order company. In 1980 he founded his own consultancy practice, NSP Group, and built a series of specialist mail order and retail businesses including Innovations and the Leading Edge retail chain. In 1988, the company went public, becoming Innovations plc. Then his problems began.

"In 1988, my family trusts sold most of their original equity stake in the Innovations group and found themselves quite a few million pounds richer. It was around that time that I was approached by a golf promoter who was looking for two additional investors prepared to put in £500,000 each to purchase a plot of land for the construction of a tournament-standard golf course.

"This sounds like fun," I thought. What attracted me was the potential for capital growth, coupled with the fact that I would enjoy participating in the management of the project. I am a golfer - though I rarely have time to play - and I considered that my direct marketing skills could be useful in terms of promoting the club.

The land was in an area of outstanding natural beauty within the M25, and it already had outline planning permission for an 18-hole golf course. We had Neil Coles, Bernard Gallacher, Tony Jacklin and Greg Norman take a look, and they all agreed that the site was perfect for tournaments.

Meanwhile, the golf authorities had published a report which indicated that there was a massive shortfall in the number of courses relative to the number of people wishing to play. It looked like an extremely good investment, so I roped in a friend, he put in £500,000 - as did my trust - and within two weeks we had purchased the land.

Unfortunately, what was supposed to be a one-off investment rapidly turned into a constant drain on our capital. First we had to pay the PGA

to design the course, along with its choice of architect, Neil Coles. Then there were town planners' fees and so on.

Next we had to drill for water to see if we could irrigate the course without using the mains, and that alone cost £25,000. Within a very short time we had spent more than £200,000.

However, once we had done all this, we started getting approaches from more than a dozen intermediaries representing mostly Japanese companies who were interested in buying the land, and within 12 months of acquiring it we were offered £4.5m.

I said to my partners, 'Hey chaps, this is an interesting turn of events ... maybe we should think about accepting'. But they said 'No, let's go back and see if we can get a little bit more.'

While the first potential purchaser was deliberating, a second offer came in for £5.5m. Again we decided to see if we could get a little bit more. Very soon afterwards we received an offer of £5.8m, so I went back to my colleagues a third time, saying it was a very generous offer and I thought we should accept. And they said, 'Let's just ask them to go the extra mile'. So I did, and the purchaser went silent.

Shortly after, the Tokyo stock market crashed. Somewhat concerned, I went back to each of the intermediaries in turn, only to be told that these companies were reviewing the status of their investments and were disinclined to invest further.

So there we were, with full planning permission for an 18-hole tournament players' course and a massive 1,800 square metre club house, but no buyers.

My colleagues suggested we should start building. I pointed out that this would mean building with debt finance. It was around this time that a number of other developments which had been built with prospective members' debenture

money had started to experience financial difficulty, and I wasn't prepared to go that route so I vetoed the idea. It was probably the only thing I did right.

By this time I was very much aware that I hadn't thought ahead before putting money into this project. I'd been too busy thinking about the pro shop and the merchandising.

I had grand designs for the development of the ultimate catalogue for all products related to golf and considered that this would be a good way of making the general promotion of the club self-liquidating by virtue of the profits, but I hadn't given enough consideration to the fundamental task, which was the development of the course itself.

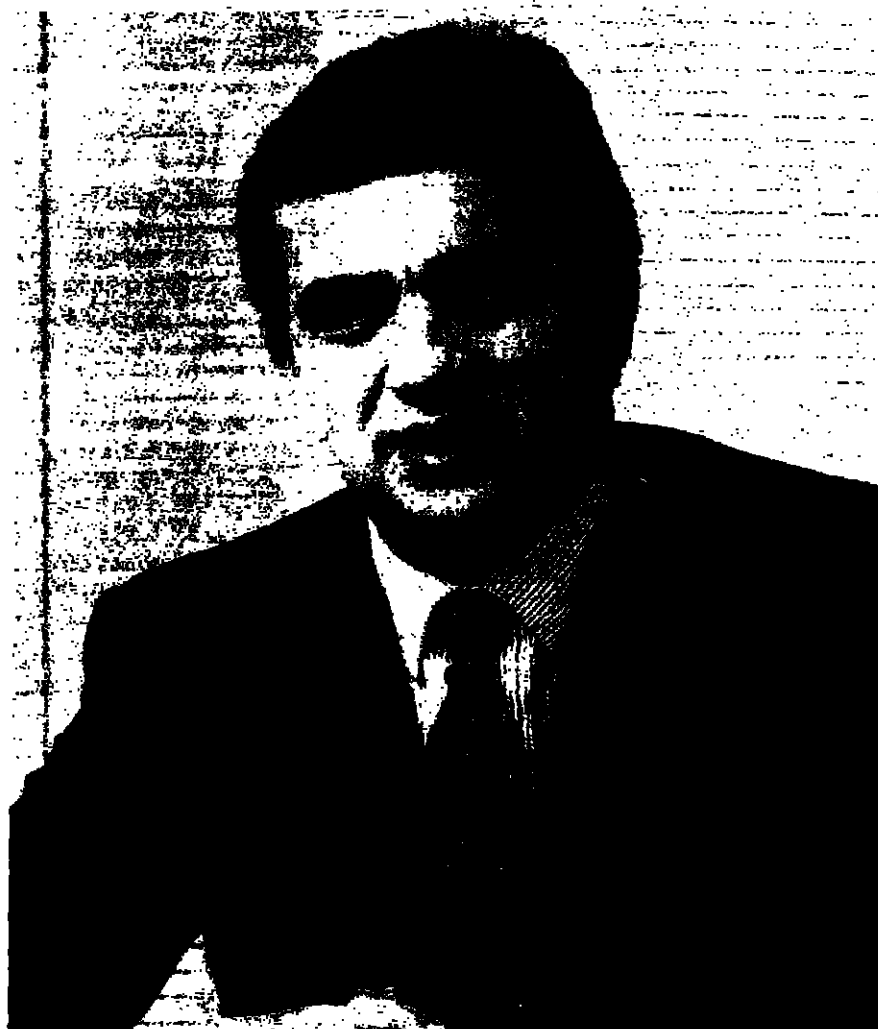
I had been carried along with the euphoria of this being a no-risk, real-estate based business. What I should have done, before recommending it to my family trust, was to consult an impartial expert in the golf sector who could have advised us of the pitfalls.

In the end, my partners and I simply had to acknowledge that we had neither the experience nor the time to develop this course, and that the best solution was to sell our investment. The hard part was accepting that whoever buys it will be able to profit from our mistakes.

If only we hadn't been greedy, we could have sold at a huge profit. Instead, we have 190 acres of land which is currently generating an income of precisely £3,800 a year for the harvesting of the hay.

It will probably go for about £1.4m, which is less than we have put in. We'd have been much better off letting that money earn interest for the last eight years.

Corinne Simcock would be interested to hear from readers who have cautionary tales of their own to tell.



Nigel Swaby: 'If only we hadn't been so greedy we could have sold at a huge profit'



LOOSE CHANGE

The mysterious case of the Morgan Grenfell European funds is a timely reminder that investments based on stock markets can never be entirely risk-free. At worst, it could set the cause of unit trusts back two years. It also comes at a convenient time for deposit accounts and a number of new "guaranteed" investments now being launched.

Scottish Life is offering a deposit bonus bond which offers investors money back and a guaranteed minimum return of 34.5 per cent after six years, equal to 5.06 per cent compound, even if the UK and US stock markets fall.

If they rise, the bond could earn bonuses of up to 17.25 per cent a year, payable for any year when both the FT-SE 100 and S&P 500 rise.

The bond is invested in a long-term deposit at Midland Bank, the bonus is created by trading in derivatives, managed in the Isle of Man to defer tax liability until the bond matures.

The gain is liable to UK income tax when it is cashed but there is an option to extend the policy beyond six years, or to assign it to a child under 18 who could cash the proceeds tax-free and finance a college education if they had no other source of income.

The ability to defer the tax could also be useful for pension and inheritance tax planning, and for trustees.

Minimum investment is £5,000 and the bond is available through IFAs. London-based Johnson Fry is launching Double-7 CHIP, a corporate bond Pep with a guaranteed return of 7 per cent a year tax-free for six years and full return of capital on maturity. Alternatively, investors can opt for a 50 per cent capital gain.

Up to £12,000 can be invested with half earning 7 per cent gross until next April when it will be Pepped free of charge. The minimum investment is £3,000.

TSB is launching a new tranche of its Guaranteed Stock Market Bond. There is an initial charge of 5 per cent but investors get this, and all money invested, back even if the stock market falls between now and maturity in October 2001.

If the index rises, investors will get 95 per cent of their initial investment plus all the appreciation in the index between the start and the average in the final year.

Any gains of 25 per cent can be locked in, and all gains are free of basic rate tax, but there will be no dividends or income and there is no early withdrawal option. The minimum investment is £2,000. Call 0500 738444 or ask at a branch.

Marks & Spencer has launched a second issue of its Guaranteed Capital Investment Plan. Cash is invested in the M&S 100 companies unit

trust via a tax-free Pep and it guarantees return of capital in full after five years or prior death. Gains are paid in full.

Minimum investment is £3,000, there is no initial charge, but the management charge is 1 per cent a year plus an annual "guarantee" fee of 1.5 per cent plus VAT. Details available in-store next week.

Birmingham Midshires is launching three equity-linked savings accounts (Elisas). One offers to match gains in the FT-SE 100 in full and return 110 per cent of the investment even if the stock market falls, a second offers 50 per cent gross after five years provided the index does not fall, and the third allows up to half the investment to earn 8 per cent gross in the first year. Minimum investment is £2,500. Call 0500 070707.

Until 27 September Chartwell Investment Management in Bath is offering to place investor cash into with-profit bonds with a choice of a dozen different insurance companies and rebate the 5 per cent commission to the investor. Call 01225 446556 for details.

Existel & West is offering an escalator Tessa paying 6.5 per cent in the first year rising by 0.25 per cent to 7 per cent in year three, then 7.5 per cent and 8 per cent. Minimum investment is £9,000.

Cheltenham & Gloucester has

withdrawn its range of discount mortgage offers, and further reduced its cash-backs, reflecting the recovery in genuine demand and a wish to reward established borrowers, according to chief executive Andrew Longhurst.

In future, only those moving home can qualify for the maximum 3 per cent cash-backs, remortgages will get a maximum of 2 per cent, but the standard variable rate will come down from 6.9 per cent to 6.85 per cent.

PEPlan is introducing a budget plan with monthly premiums for cross-bred dogs. It covers up to £1,000 in vet fees for each event. Lower rates are available to owners who pay the first charge themselves.

Travellers will be able to buy and sell back foreign currency and travellers cheques from the 700 travel shops of Going Places free of commission for the next 15 days. The promotion covers the busiest travel time of the year and could cost £1m, although the head of foreign exchange, John Bavier, hopes to sell more holidays to customers looking for a package.

Alliance & Leicester has cut its two-year fixed mortgage rate from 5.10 to 4.99 per cent, cut the fixed rate element on its two-stage Double deal mortgage to 5.4 per cent and extended its existing one-, two-, three- and five-year fixed rate offers.

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FEAR OF FINANCE

Clifford German

The Chancellor redeemed his reputation for fiscal prudence very cheaply this week, simply by leaving base rates unchanged at a time when the City had persuaded itself that he was about to order a further quarter-point cut in the teeth of opposition from the Governor of the Bank of England.

Simply by holding the line, the Chancellor has reassured the City and the foreign exchange markets, for the time being at least, and avoided the risk of an open split with the Governor.

The economy, while not exactly firing on all cylinders, is moving forward on most fronts. Consumer spending is growing fastest but investments and exports are relatively buoyant, and residential property prices, the prelude to faster economic growth and rising inflation, are rising.

Many pundits think there is no longer any scope for a cut even in nominal interest rates, with house prices recovering gradually and unemployment falling (even if it still represents a massive waste of resources and a burden on the budget). If there is to be another cut in rates, moreover, the timing is wrong. It will have more impact either around the time of the Conservative Party conference next month, or around the time of the Budget at the end of November, when a cut in interest rates would either pad out a small cut in income taxes or even act as a substitute for a tax cut.

In fact, the only case for a cut this month would be if the Government decides on a snap election in the autumn, and this looks unlikely with the Labour lead in the polls still looking solid and John Major's gut instinct to wait until the spring.

Meanwhile, New Labour has played true to type this

week by going further in the direction of tax-cutting than the Tory Chancellor. A basic rate of 15p or even 10p sounds irresistible, although its value depends how wide the new bottom band is and whether or not it replaces or absorbs the existing 20p band, which itself is increasingly anachronistic. It is only 4p below the basic rate, although it is also the standard rate for dividends and savings.

New Labour's plans are designed to help the lowest-paid of course, and a new low starting rate for tax would have much the same effect on take-home pay as a minimum wage. Paying 10p instead of the current 20p on the first £3,900 of taxable income earned, after deducting allowances, would be worth £7.50 a week to all workers, while an extra 50p an hour on low wages would be worth £14.40 more (net of 20p tax on a 36 hour week).

Either benefit would be useful, but it might seem too much to offer both, and the main question is which to choose: one comes out of the taxpayer's pocket and is a universal benefit, the other is paid by employers and specifically targets the poorly paid.

To complicate the argument still further, the biggest burden low-paid workers have to bear is not income tax but national insurance, which docks 10 per cent of everything they earn above £61 a week, assuming they are not contracted out of Serps. It means that true tax rates are 10 per cent higher than the published rates, but no Chancellor has yet dared to do the logical thing and merge tax and national insurance systems.

But the Labour Party's uncoordinated half-promises do offer Kenneth Clarke the opportunity to do a little upstaging of his own when he delivers the Budget at the end of November.

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Telephone	% Rate and period	Max adv %	Fee	Incentive	Redemption penalty
Fixed rates					
Scarborough BS	0800 580547	0.20 for 1 year	85	0.75%	—
West Bromwich BS	0121 525 7070	6.55 to 1/11/99	85	£295	£300 cash rebate
Britannia BS	0800 526350	7.74 for 5 years	95	£295	Unemployment ins — 1st 6 yrs: 180 days interest
Variable rates					
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	0.99 to 1/10/97	90	—	Refund value fee
Principality BS	01222 344188	3.60% to 1/10/98	90	—	1st 6 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
Abbey National	0800 555100	5.74 to 31/8/01	95	—	To 31/8/02: Ind determined
First time buyers fixed rates					
Bristol & West BS	0800 608088	1.95 to 31/7/97	90	£275	—
Market Harborough BS	01858 463244	4.49 to 1/7/98	90	£250	Unemployment ins
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	7.49 to 1/8/01	95	£295	1st 6 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
First time buyers variable rates					
Principality BS	01222 344188	1.00 to 1/10/97	90	—	To 30/9/01: discount reclaim
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	4.24% to 1/10/99	95	£295	1st 7 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
Halifax BS	0800 101110	5.43 to 30/9/01	90	—	To 30/9/03: 1-4% of advance

Telephone	APR	Fixed monthly payments (£3,000 over 3 years)
Unsecured		
Direct Line	0141 248 9966	13.90E
Alliance & Leicester	0116 262 6262	14.80
Midland Bank	0800 180180	14.90
Secured (second charge)		
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	7.50
Royal Bank of Scotland	0131 523 7023	8.70
Barclays Bank	0800 000929	9.3/9.6

Telephone	Account	% pm	APR	Unauthorised	APR
Woodwich BS	0800 400900	Current	0.76	9.5	2.18
Alliance & Leicester	0500 959595	Alliance	0.76	9.5	2.20
Abbey National	0500 200500	Current	0.94	11.9	2.18

Telephone	Card Type	Min Income	Rate % pm	APR %	Annual Fee	Int. free period
Standard						
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	—	0.8958	11.20	nil
Midland Bank	01702 353344	MasterCard/Visa	—	0.9454	11.80M	56 days
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	—	1.00	14.00	56 days
Gold cards						
Co-operative Bank	0345 212212	Visa	£20,000	0.4792	10.32	£120
Royal Bank of Scotland	01702 362890	Visa	£20,000	1.05M	14.50M	£35
People's Bank Conn	0500 551055	MasterCard/Visa	£20,000	1.13	14.40	nil

Telephone	Payment by direct debit	Payment by other methods
John Lewis		
in store	—	—
1.39	APR	APR
1.39	1.39	18.00
Marks and Spencer		
01244 681681	1.87	24.80
1.94	25.90	2.20
2.20	29.80	

APR Annualised percentage rate. B-C Buildings and Contents Insurance LTV Loan to value ASU Accident, sickness and unemployment E Available to comprehensive motor insurance policyholders aged over 22 years. N Introductory rate for a limited period. All rates subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01632 500677 5 September 1996

Best savings rates

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Portman BS					
01202 292444	Instant Access	Instant	£100	4.50	Year
0345 252000	Pathfinder	Instant	£5,000	4.75	Month
0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Instant	£50,000	5.50	Year
0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Instant	£50,000	5.75	Year
Teachers' BS					
0800 378669	Bullion	Postal	£500	4.80	Year
0645 645660	Instant Direct	Postal	£5,000	5.40	Year
0800 901109	Instant Access Postal	Postal	£10,000	5.85	Year
0800 901109	Instant Access Postal	Postal	£25,000	6.05	Year

Cheltenham BS	0800 132351	Post-let 20 Day	20 day P	£5,000	6.05	Year
Cheltenham & Gloucester	0800 717505	Direct 30	30 day P	£100	5.50	Year
First National BS	0800 558844	90 Day Notice	90 day P	£10,000	6.20	Year
Yorkshire BS	0800 378836	Mutual Interest	1 Yr Bond	£1,000	6.25	Year

Westport Benson	01202 502404	HICA	Instant	£2,500	5.00	Month
Halifax BS	01422 335333	Asset Reserve	Instant	£10,000	4.00	Quarter
Cheltenham BS	0800 717515	Classic Postal	Instant	£10,000	4.35	Year
Cheltenham BS	0800 717515	Classic Postal	Instant	£25,000	4.65	Year

Bristol & West BS	0800 202121	Year Plus Bond	1/12/97	£5,000	6.25F	Maturity
WestWest Bank	01733 351497	Fixed Interest Bond	2 Yr Bond	£10,000	6.60F	Year
Yorkshire BS	0800 378836	Investment Bond	31/5/99	£2,500	7.20F	Year
Staples BS	01756 700511	Fixed Rate Bond	31/10/01	£5,000	7.55F	Year

GUARANTEED INCOME						
Financial Assurance	0181 380 3388	1 year	£50,000	4.80FN	Year	
Principale Insurance	0181 207 9007	2 years	£3,000	5.60FN	Year	
Principale Insurance	0181 207 9007	3 years	£3,000	5.80FN	Year	
ITF London & Edinburgh	01903 620820	4 years	£3,000	6.20FN	Year	
Principale Insurance	0181 207 9007	5 years	£3,000	6.50FN	Year	

OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (cont.)						
Newcastle Bank Gibraltar	00 350 76168	Nova Access	Instant	£25,000	6.30	Year
Newcastle Bank Gibraltar	00 350 76168	Nova Minity	90 Day	£25,000	6.50	Year
Britannia International	01624 628512	2 Year Bond	31/7/98	£5,000	7.00F	Year
Northern Rock, Guern	01481 714600	Millennium Bond	1/1/00	£10,000	7.50F	Year

Financial Assurance	0181 380 3388	1 year	£50,000	4.80F	Year
Prima Insurance	0181 207 9007	2 years	£3,000	5.50F	Year
Prima Insurance	0181 207 9007	3 years	£3,000	5.80F	Year
ITT London & Edinburgh	01903 820820	4 years	£3,000	6.20F	Year
Prima Insurance	0181 207 9007	5 years	£3,000	6.50F	Year

Newcastle Bank Gibraltar	0350 76168	Nova Access	Instant	£25,000	6.30	Year
Newcastle Bank Gibraltar	0350 76168	Nova Minity	90 Day	£25,000	6.50	Year
Britannia International	01624 629512	2 Year Bond	31/7/98	£5,000	7.00F	Year
Northern Rock, Guam	01481 714600	Millennium Bond	1/1/00	£10,000	7.50F	Year

Children's Bond	Issue H	5 year	£25	6.75F	Maturity
P post only	F fixed rate				
R ref rate	A All withdrawals subject of 30 day loss of interest				

P post only F fixed rate A All withdrawals subject to 30 day loss of interest All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01632 500677 5 September 1996

THE NEW WOOLWICH DIRECT POSTAL 60 ACCOUNT

6.50% GROSS P.A.

RETURN TO SENDER

Introducing the new Postal 60 Account from Woolwich Direct.

The highest quality of service because it's the Woolwich.

Straightforward and convenient because it's direct to your door.

Operating your account by post means we can offer you higher rates on a minimum investment of £2,500. What's more, you can make one no-penalty instant withdrawal a year.

For a higher interest rate from the Woolwich, direct to your door call us free now quoting ref. IP79 or: 0800 60 60 40.

WOOLWICH DIRECT

HIGH INTEREST RATES DIRECT TO YOUR DOOR

Current rates for monthly income £2,500-£4,999: 6.50%, £5,000-£9,999: 6.75%, £10,000-£14,999: 6.90%, £15,000-£19,999: 7.05%, £20,000-£24,999: 7.20%, £25,000-£29,999: 7.35%, £30,000-£34,999: 7.50%, £35,000-£39,999: 7.65%, £40,000-£44,999: 7.80%, £45,000-£49,999: 7.95%, £50,000-£54,999: 8.10%, £55,000-£59,999: 8.25%, £60,000-£64,999: 8.40%, £65,000-£69,999: 8.55%, £70,000-£74,999: 8.70%, £75,000-£79,999: 8.85%, £80,000-£84,999: 9.00%, £85,000-£89,999: 9.15%, £90,000-£94,999: 9.30%, £95,000-£99,999: 9.45%, £100,000-£149,999: 9.60%, £150,000-£199,999: 9.75%, £200,000-£249,999: 9.90%, £250,000-£299,999: 10.05%, £300,000-£349,999: 10.20%, £350,000-£399,999: 10.35%, £400,000-£449,999: 10.50%, £450,000-£499,999: 10.65%, £500,000-£549,999: 10.80%, £550,000-£599,999: 10.95%, £600,000-£649,999: 11.10%, £650,000-£699,999: 11.25%, £700,000-£749,999: 11.40%, £750,000-£799,999: 11.55%, £800,000-£849,999: 11.70%, £850,000-£899,999: 11.85%, £900,000-£949,999: 12.00%, £950,000-£999,999: 12.15%, £1,000,000-£1,499,999: 12.30%, £1,500,000-£1,999,999: 12.45%, £2,000,000-£2,499,999: 12.60%, £2,500,000-£2,999,999: 12.75%, £3,000,000-£3,499,999: 12.90%, £3,500,000-£3,999,999: 13.05%, £4,000,000-£4,499,999: 13.20%, £4,500,000-£4,999,999: 13.35%, £5,000,000-£5,499,999: 13.50%, £5,500,000-£5,999,999: 13.65%, £6,000,000-£6,499,999: 13.80%, £6,500,000-£6,999,999: 13.95%, £7,000,000-£7,499,999: 14.10%, £7,500,000-£7,999,999: 14.25%, £8,000,000-£8,499,999: 14.40%, £8,500,000-£8,999,999: 14.55%, £9,000,000-£9,499,999: 14.70%, £9,500,000-£9,999,999: 14.85%, £10,000,000-£14,999,999: 15.00%, £15,000,000-£19,999,999: 15.15%, £20,000,000-£24,999,999: 15.30%, £25,000,000-£29,999,999: 15.45%, £30,000,000-£34,999,999: 15.60%, £35,000,000-£39,999,999: 15.75%, £40,000,000-£44,999,999: 15.90%, £45,000,000-£49,999,999: 16.05%, £50,000,000-£54,999,999: 16.20%, £55,000,000-£59,999,999: 16.35%, £60,000,000-£64,999,999: 16.50%, £65,000,000-£69,999,999: 16.65%, £70,000,000-£74,999,999: 16.80%, £75,000,000-£79,999,999: 16.95%, £80,000,000-£84,999,999: 17.10%, £85,000,000-£89,999,999: 17.25%, £90,000,000-£94,999,999: 17.40%, £95,000,000-£99,999,999: 17.55%, £100,000,000-£149,999,999: 17.70%, £150,000,000-£199,999,999: 17.85%, £200,000,000-£249,999,999: 18.00%, £250,000,000-£299,999,999: 18.15%, £300,000,000-£349,999,999: 18.30%, £350,000,000-£399,999,999: 18.45%, £400,000,000-£449,999,999: 18.60%, £450,000,000-£499,999,999: 18.75%, £500,000,000-£549,999,999: 18.90%, £550,000,000-£599,999,999: 19.05%, £600,000,000-£649,999,999: 19.20%, £650,000,000-£699,999,999: 19.35%, £700,000,000-£749,999,999: 19.50%, £750,000,000-£799,999,999: 19.65%, £800,000,000-£849,999,999: 19.80%, £850,000,000-£899,999,999: 19.95%, £900,000,000-£949,999,999: 20.10%, £950,000,000-£999,999,999: 20.25%, £1,000,000,000-£1,499,999,999: 20.40%, £1,500,000,000-£1,999,999,999: 20.55%, £2,000,000,000-£2,499,999,999: 20.70%, £2,500,000,000-£2,999,999,999: 20.85%, £3,000,000,000-£3,499,999,999: 21.00%, £3,500,000,000-£3,999,999,999: 21.15%, £4,000,000,000-£4,499,999,999: 21.30%, £4,500,000,000-£4,999,999,999: 21.45%, £5,000,000,000-£5,499,999,999: 21.60%, £5,500,000,000-£5,999,999,999: 21.75%, £6,000,000,000-£6,499,999,999: 21.90%, £6,500,000,000-£6,999,999,999: 22.05%, £7,000,000,000-£7,499,999,999: 22.20%, £7,500,000,000-£7,999,999,999: 22.35%, £8,000,000,000-£8,499,999,999: 22.50%, £8,500,000,000-£8,999,999,999: 22.65%, £9,000,000,000-£9,499,999,999: 22.80%, £9,500,000,000-£9,999,999,999: 22.95%, £10,000,000,000-£14,999,999,999: 23.10%, £15,000,000,000-£19,999,999,999: 23.25%, £20,000,000,000-£24,999,999,999: 23.40%, £25,000,000,000-£29,999,999,999: 23.55%, £30,000,000,000-£34,999,999,999: 23.70%, £35,000,000,000-£39,999,999,999: 23.85%, £40,000,000,000-£44,999,999,999: 24.00%, £45,000,000,000-£49,999,999,999: 24.15%, £50,000,000,000-£54,999,999,999: 24.30%, £55,000,000,000-£59,999,999,999: 24.45%, £60,000,000,000-£64,999,999,999: 24.60%, £65,000,000,000-£69,999,999,999: 24.75%, £70,000,000,000-£74,999,999,999: 24.90%, £75,000,000,000-£79,999,999,999: 25.05%, £80,000,000,000-£84,999,999,999: 25.20%, £85,

British citizens can now shop for policies on the Continent. While not duty free, there are tax advantages, writes David Evans

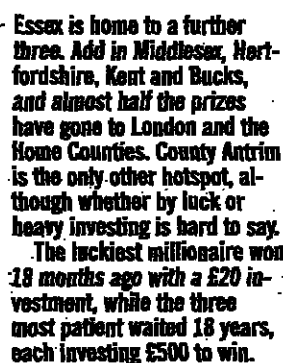
The key to lower charges is the different way life assurance company funds are taxed across the EU. The UK approach to the taxation of life assurance funds is different from almost all the rest of Europe. Of course, until July 1994 this was of academic interest only, because prior to this date UK residents were simply not allowed to buy European insurance policies.

The UK tax rules relating to the individual policy for those with European policies is exactly the same, so a UK resident

Indeed, in certain cases, the European whole-of-life policy has proved to be as much as 25 per cent cheaper than its equivalent UK competitor. The indicators are clear: while we may buy our cars from Germany and wine from France, we should now be looking very carefully at whether we should not be buying life assurance from, perhaps, Dublin or Luxembourg.

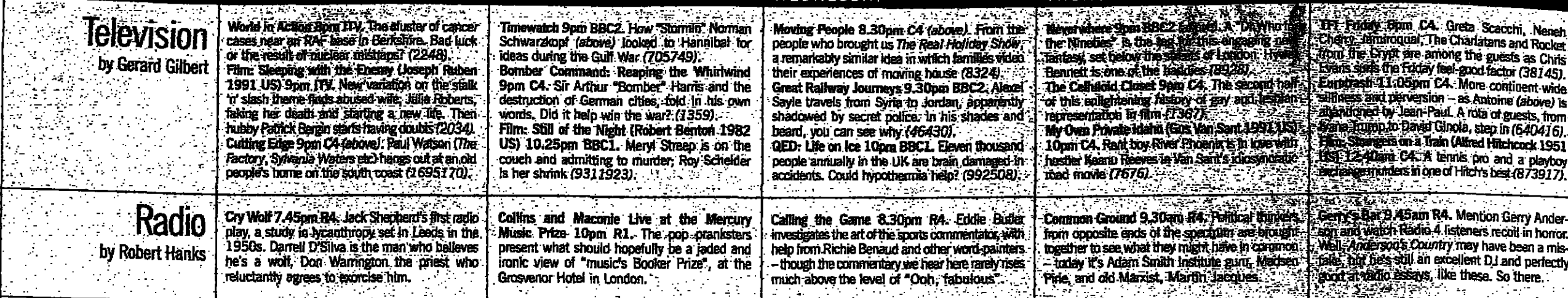
Perhaps the tax structure for UK life companies will change, but until it does UK citizens should not halt the selection process for insurance products at the white cliffs of Dover. Just think, if we can save up to 25 per cent on the premiums for our whole-of-life policy, there will be more to spend in the duty-free shop when we go on holiday to Europe this summer.

David Evans is UK sales director of Scottish Amicable European in Dublin



The truth lies somewhere inbetween. The new forms are couched in straightforward language, the paragraphs are grouped and sectioned in numbers, 10.1, followed by 10.2 etc, and start with an explanatory sentence followed by a series of questions which require the answers Yes or No.

THE NEW M&G EUROPEAN SMALLER COMPANIES FUND



BBC1

BBC 2

ITV/London

Channel 4

ITV/Regions

[illegible]

Radio

Radio 1
97.5-103.9MHz
 7.00 *John Peel's Evening Session*
 7.45 *Dee Dee* 2.00 *Trevor Nelson's Rhythm Nation* 4.00 *UK Top 40*
 7.00 *People Say We Monks*
 8.00 *Acoustic* 9.00 *John Peel's Top 40*
 10.00 *Anna and Andy Kershaw* 12.00
 Mary Anne Hobbs 4.00-6.30am
 Charlie Jordan

Radio 2
97.3-103.9MHz
 7.00am *Don Maclean's 9.05 News*
 7.00am *Andy Lewis* 7.30am *1.00*
Pearson's Sunday Supplement
 1.00 *Desmond Carrington* 3.00
 Benny Green 4.00 *Howard Keel*
 5.00 *Great British Music* 6.30 *Sing*
 7.00 *Green* 8.00 *Simple* 5.00 *Pam Ayres*
 7.00 *Hugh Saulty* 8.30 *Sunday Hall*
 9.00 *Alan Keel* 11.00 *Semi-*
Finals 12.00 *John Peel* 1.00 *Steve*
Macdon 3.00-6.00am *Alan Lester*

Radio 3
92.2-102.4MHz
 7.00am *Sacred and Profane*
 8.00 *Circle of Three*
 9.00 *Brian Kay's Sunday Morning*
 10.00 *John Peel* 11.00 *John Peel*
 1.00 *New for Old: Myths Retold*
Pandemonium, by Michele
 Winder (RB)
 1.15 *World International Festival*
 2.00 *Writer's personal setting of the*
Roman mass for the dead, interspersed
with anti-war poetry, composed by
William Lawler 4.30 *By Brian*
Thornhill, Clara Robinson (soprano),
Anthony Rolle Johnson (tenor),
Thomas Quasthoff (bass), Edinburgh
Choir of the Royal Festival Hall
 5.00 *National Orchestra Junior*
 6.00 *Scottish National Orchestra*
 7.00 *Chorus, Royal Scottish National*
Orchestra, Donald Runciman.

7.00 *Spill of the Age*
 8.00 *World International Festival*
 9.00 *The Sunday Festival: A Very*
Big Guy, Humphrey Carpenter
 10.00 *Portrait of a Profile of Reggie*
 11.00 *Smith's inspiration for his wife*
Olivia Manning's portrayal of Guy
Pringle in The Fortunes of War
 12.00 *Top 100* 1.00 *News*
 2.00 *Top 100* 3.00 *News*
 3.00 *BBC Proms 1996. Live from the*
Royal Albert Hall, David Jones
(mezzo) and Roderick Thorpe
*(piano) 4.00 *Wales* 4.00 *David**
Rimsy-Korsic, Capriccio
español, Montserrat: Five
Negro Stars, Fells: El
atrás de la
San Francisco. Petrus

4.45 *The Sunday Play: Shoot-out at*
St Davids. Tough urban drama
 by John Fetherston and Sean
 Hay, in which a Liverpool comedian
 becomes so traumatised after
 discovering a pile of
 corpses left in a cellar by his
 criminal brother that he loses the
 power of speech and flutters
 across the stage like a bird.
 By N. S. Davids.



Choice

Marcus Chown starts a new series on the culture of science, *Probe* (4.15pm R4), by looking at scientific fraud. Meanwhile, one of the frauds of the century – the Monkees (left) didn't play their own instruments! – is exposed in *People Say We Monkee Around* (7pm R1).

9.59 Weather.
10.00 News.
10.15 Medicine Now.
10.45 Breakway.
11.15 In Search of the National Interest.
11.45 Seeds of Faith.
12.00 News.
12.15 On Sunday.
12.30 The Late Show: *Lette's Little Habit*, by Dorothy Schwarz.
12.48 Shipping Forecast.
1.00 The World Service.
5.50 Inshore Forecast.
5.55-6.00am Shipping Forecast.

Radio 5
(093. 90.5kHz AM)
6.05am Brief Lives 6.30 Brian
Breakfast 9.05 Sunday
With Mail 11.35 Special Assignment
12.05 The Big Byte 12.30
The Game's Up 12.55 Sunday
Countdown 1.00. 8.00 Events and
the Super League Final 12.05 Night
Moves 2.05 Up All Night 5.00-
6.00am Morning Reports

Classic FM
(102.1 107.5kHz FM)
10am Sarah Lucas. 8.00 Money
Marathon. A special fund-raising
event in aid of the National Appeal
for Music Therapy. 7.00 Count-
down. 6.00. 8.00 Events and
Concert. Mozart: Overture: The
Marriage of Figaro. Johann Strauss
Jr: Emperor Waltz. Dvorak: Violin
Concerto. A minor. Mussorgsky/
Ravel: Pictures at an
Exhibition. Beethoven: 10.00 Gary
Hood's Week. 12.00 Andy Loran
and 4.00am Mark Griffiths.

Virgin Radio
(125.1, 119.7-125.1kHz. AM 102.5kHz FM)
6.00am Jean Lee Grace 10.00
Gramham Dean 2.00 Nicky Horne
6.00 Lynn Parsons 10.00 Gary
Hood 12.00-5.00am Jeremy Clark

World Service
(539kHz LW)
1.30 Newsweek 1.30 Development
'96 1.45 Britain Today 2.20
Newsweek 2.30 Sessing Stars 2.45
On the Move 3.00 Newsweek 3.30
The Way of the Buddha 4.00 World
News 4.15 Sports Roundup 4.30
Jazz for the Asking 5.00 Gary
Hood's Week 5.30 The Sunday
Evening 5.30-6.00am Country Style

Satellite

[illegible]

Pastimes

Chess William Hartston

The most pointless event for some time was played over the Internet a couple of weeks ago. Billed as "Anatoly Karpov against the Rest of the World", it pitted the Fide world champion against the combined efforts of Internetrati.

A wizard wheeze, you might think, but the problem was that the World's moves were decided by a first-past-the-post voting system - anyone could e-mail a move and the most popular one was played. Which, since popularity is far from a guarantee of excellence, tended to pick the blandest, most mediocre move every time.

As the moves testify, Karpov's main problem was to avoid making the game look as one-sided as it really was. After voting for the feeble 6.Bd3 in the opening,

Bridge Alan Hiron

"Plus 50"; "Minus 50". was how the comparison time started in a recent match. As the recipients of 50 points, my partner and I were, to say the least, disappointed. This was the deal in question.

At our table, South opened 20-20 trumps, suggesting 20-22 points. With three tens to spare, he was certainly full value for his bid, but could hardly proceed when North raised directly to Six No-trumps. Indeed, after I had led ♠9, the complete duplication of distribution left declarer with the problem of finding his 12th trick.

Counting carefully, South cashed most of his winners to leave a three-card ending where everyone was known to

Perplexity

Mixed Doubles

Asian seamen's grades coil seam tappers.

The above sentence hides three related names (each a first name plus surname), all famous in the same area. To find them, you must group the six words into pairs, then rearrange the letters within each pair.

A copy of the Larousse *Desk Reference Encyclopedia* will be awarded to the sender of the first correct entry opened on 19 September. Entries to: Saturday Pastimes, the *Independent*.

1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

24 August answer:
MENSA + MENSA = DIMWIT
is 89235 + 89235 = 178470. so
DSANE = 73259

Winner: Jenny Jacobs.

Bridge Alan Hiron

"Plus 50"; "Minus 50", was how the comparison time started in a recent match. As the recipients of 50 points, my partner and I were, to say the least, disappointed. This was the deal in question.

At our table, South opened 2N-trumps, suggesting 22-22 points. My partner tended to spare, as there was certainly full value for his bid, but could hardly proceed when North raised directly to Six N-trumps. Indeed, after I had led ♠9, the complete duplication of distribution left declarer with the problem of finding his 12th trick.

Counting carefully, South cashed most of his winners to leave a three-card ending where everyone was known to

Love all; dealer South	
North	
♠AK5	
♥Q97	
♦Q832	
♣QJ4	
West	East
♠987	♠6432
♥K1062	♥J43
♦654	♦97
♣972	♣8653
South	
♠QJ10	
♥A85	
♦AKJ10	
♣AK10	

have only hearts left. Then he led a low heart from hand. It would all have been over if I had taken my king but I was able to introduce a diversion by following with my ten.

هكذا من الأصل

Sport and party politics, the perfect match

"They'll always play in blue," said the Chelsea football magnate Matthew Harding yesterday, discussing his £1m gift to the Reds. It might not have been much of a joke; it certainly was not what you would call chromatically accurate, given new Labour's move rightwards; but it was one of those remarks that sign the times. A decade, even five years ago, sport and politics just would not have had enough affinity to make the connection intelligible. Now it is sometimes hard to see where sport ends and politics begins. Or, for that matter, vice versa.

Take the Five Nations rugby union championship. The ambassadors from the powers have been satisfied. Now, praise be, it seems that Scotland, Wales, England, France and Ireland will go on playing each other. The Five Nations has always been an odd contest, with a distinct political dimension. A single match at Lansdowne Road, Dublin, can say more about the depth and permanence of the Anglo-Irish connection than a score of speeches from the podium in the Dail or at Stormont. The social composition and culture of modern Britain are revealed in the difference - on the field, as much as in the stands - between Scotland and England at Hampden Park and Scotland and England at Murrayfield.

In recent weeks the game of rugby has become a political process. Those late night committees, the "peace in our times" appearance of Colin Hurrell, the English Rugby Football Union treasurer (a mobile phone replacing Neville Chamberlain's slip of paper), the threats and the promises... it all looks just like agriculture ministers negotiating in Brussels or, to use an ancient analogy, a Labour prime minister and union barons at Number 10. Smoke-filled dugouts, so to speak.

Of course, the rugby negotiations are not over. The very existence of an England squad remains in doubt until the RFU and English Professional Rugby Clubs Ltd have signed their Treaty of Twickenham. Conventional wisdom says that all we are witnessing here is the advent of big money. Where there's brass, there's behaviour that makes the old codes redundant. Rupert Murdoch fishes in the sporting ponds and see how quickly the turbid waters froth. But we are witnessing the politicisation of sport at the same time as its commercialisation.

Suddenly the very constitution of sport is up for grabs. Conventions everyone had taken for granted are exposed for the mere gentlemen's agreements they are: the world, by contrast, is populated by rougher, tougher types. One sport follows another to the rev-



olution, intoxicated by new freedoms and vague promises of betterment. Cricket sees the advance of democracy, as clubs vote (heavens above!) for England selectors. Football confronts the politics of elitism, for it cannot be long before the Premiership floats even further offshore, and the Football Association, like the RFU, sinks or swims after it.

It used to be argued that the significance of politics would inevitably diminish as we moved into a world where we had more time for leisure and informal pursuits. Instead, it seems, the institutions that supply leisure - rugby football unions, Premiership, Olympic committees and the rest - turn out to be intensely political. Committees, general secretaries, garnering votes - it all goes on in sport, as in the corridors of Westminster. The reason is that what happens on the pitches and arenas matters. It is about national and local identity, about vicarious competition and challenge, and it is therefore controversial, disputatious, and - interesting.

So sports off the field become news - and not just people's love lives, either. And sports institutions are not just expected to behave politically, they are required to do so. Only yesterday a senior doctor laid out Manchester United for its association with

a whisky brand - the club, he was asserting, has ethical responsibilities because it is an organism which exists in the public space and so has "political" responsibilities, such as concern for young people's health.

But if sport is becoming political, are there signs of movement in the other direction? There has always been a gladiatorial element in British party politics - we are watching now as Kenneth Clarke oils his torso and Gordon Brown combs out his locks in order to battle it out under the Klieg lights at Westminster. Much was forgiven Norman Tebbit when his nastiness was interpreted as a tactic, and his cultivation of a Vinnie Jones persona as a way of giving himself a political identity. Brian Mawhinney aspires to something like the same position - a sort of political Norman Hunter.

Perhaps, in future, democratic politics will come more and more to seem like a minority sport, a kind of closed contest with its own rules and rewards that we watch on television cheering on the players on black and white, or claret and blue. The more the House of Commons becomes a bear-pit, the fiercer press conference rhetoric grows, the more "entertaining" the spectacle. Sports becomes politics, politics becomes sport. The day may not be far off when you can only watch Prime Minister's Question Time on pay TV.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A historic betrayal of the Kurds: why Barzani threw in his lot with Saddam

Sir: The correspondence between the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Americans ("US blamed for causing Iraq crisis", 6 September) may have taken place. But I have a feeling that the decision to go over to Saddam was already taken when Massoud Barzani was asking Washington for help "against the Iranians". As long ago as February, I heard from Kurdish exiles that Barzani had received armoured vehicles from Baghdad. The correspondence may have been designed to justify, afterwards, an act which will go down in the history of the Kurds as the worst act of treason since a Kurd showed the way to Xenophon, the Greek general, after the Kurd's friend had been tortured to death in 401BC.

As a writer on the Middle East, and because I am a Kurd myself - an exile from Iran - I have known both the Iraqi Kurdish leaders for decades. I concede that the decision to let the murderer of Halabja, with his gas bombs and raping rooms, back into Kurdistan must have been difficult for Barzani. But he is not very intelligent, and he is a tribal man, the leader of a "party" whose leadership is

hereditary. No wonder then, that the intrigues of Turkey and Iran, the need to rely on taxes imposed on smugglers, and the failure of winning formal recognition abroad for the Kurdish people, became the sparks needed to begin the civil war of the past two years. The truth remains that the Americans did not believe Barzani's claim that Jalal Talabani was receiving substantial aid from Iran. In fact, the Iranians have been helping Saddam - ask the Americans - by selling tens of tankers of Iraqi oil in the Gulf disguised as Iranian.

In any case, Saddam Hussein has scored a major victory. In return for a few radar dishes knocked down in southern Iraq, he has sent his tanks into the Kurdish region and is now in charge of half of Iraqi Kurdistan. If I have any insight into his mind, he will now wait only a few weeks before going for the big prize, the city of Sulaymaniyah, which, unlike Arbil, would not be taken by a surprise. A huge wave of refugees, and utter humiliation for the United States, may well be facing us.

HAZHIR TEIMOURIAN
London SW7

Sir: Now that Turkey has intervened in the Iraqi situation, the failure of press and politicians to comment on that country's aggression against its own Kurds becomes even more astonishing.

Ravelling Saddam Hussein in brutality, the Turkish authorities have been responsible over recent years for some 15,000 to 20,000 Kurdish deaths, the razing of over 2,000 villages and the expulsion from Turkish Kurdistan of between 2 and 3 million people. The Kurdish language is prohibited, democratically elected MPs are imprisoned, political parties are banned, newspapers are shut down or bombed out of existence and journalists are murdered, imprisoned, tortured and "disappear".

Europe rewards the Turkish government by accepting the country into customs union and then fails to enforce the conditions of entry. The US provides a plentiful arms supply. Western hypocrisy stinks to high heaven, and the terrible travail of the Turkish Kurds continues. Meanwhile the media, like the priest and the

Levite, claiming to be the people's conscience, pass by on the other side. CYNOC DAFIS MP (Ceredigion and Pembroke North, Pled Cymru)

Sir: Hugh Pope ("US abandoned us, say Kurds", 4 September) quotes a "KDP fighter" as saying that during the clashes in Arbil, the "Mujahedin-e-Khalq" (The People's Mojahedin of Iran) accompanied forces of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iraq and the Iraqi army.

No members of the Mojahedin or the National Liberation Army, the Iranian Resistance's military arm, were involved. For years the Iranian Resistance has emphasised that in no way has it or will it ever get involved in Iraq's internal affairs. The presence of the Iranian Resistance's military arm along the Iran-Iraq frontier, hundreds of miles away from Kurdish regions, is only to overthrow the religious, terrorist dictatorship ruling Iran. The Mojahedin have no forces or bases in Iraqi Kurdistan. HOSEIN MIR ABEDINI
Press Office, the People's Mojahedin
London NW4

Sir: The embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran rebuts the baseless allegations against Iran reported in Lord Bethell's article (20 August).

It would have been appropriate for Lord Bethell to point to the range of services and facilities made available to the Iraqi-based Mujahedin-e-Khalq terrorist organisation by some countries who claim to be in the forefront of combating terrorism. Such countries have always tried to divert attention from their mistakes, misdeeds and problems by pointing their accusing fingers at others.

Official investigations in Argentina have contradicted all the accusations against Iran in connection with incidents in that country.

The United States is going through an election year. The Iran-bashing tactic has once again been adopted by US politicians in order to attract votes.

MOHAMMAD SARAFI
Head of Mission
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
London SW7

LETTER from THE EDITOR

Nervous laughter in the office: "let's phone Lord Dacre". Any big historical story, particularly anything involving the Nazis, makes most journalists wince and think twice, recalling the notorious *Sunday Times* "Hitler's Diaries" fiasco. But the declassified US documents on the finances of companies and individuals who thrived under the Nazi regime (up to and including Hitler himself), being dug out for the World Jewish Congress are, in the opinion of everyone who has seen them, authentic. Nor are they of mere historical interest: if evidence is found that funds were indeed exported abroad, then banks may open their accounts and law suits may start.

All of which shows how, a half-century on, the Nazi era still shadows our imagination. It isn't only the fringe of neo-Nazi maniacs. Nazi insignia, war machines, uniforms, personalities and flags have a white-knuckled grip on the imaginations of millions of men and boys. Robert Harris's bestseller *Fatherland* was only the latest in a series of Nazi-based fictions. Years ago, I seem to remember, Alan Coren, the humorous writer, produced a book called *Golfing for Cats*, with a Swastika on the front cover, based on a publishing anecdote about what sold books - golf, cats and Nazis. This means, perhaps, that Hitler's regime simply had the best advertising department of the century; nasty "creatives" whose designs and slogans worked better than anything dreamed up subsequently in Wardour Street.

The spread of CJD among farmers; the condition of the marsh Arabs of southern Iraq; strikes in further education; links between overseas aid quangoes and large industrial companies; the fate of the elderly lady carried from her home on a stretcher after protesting at the east London road extension; the scare about phthalates in baby milk formula... all these are among the subjects readers have written to me about since last week, when I asked for comments about stories you thought newspapers in general, and the *Independent* in particular, had reported and then forgotten.

Finally, many thanks to Robert Mills from Ebbw in Devon who writes that for continuity the paper is "excellent". This lifted my spirits, until I got to the next sentence, which said: "I am usually in a minority of one, so you should weight my views accordingly."

Andrew Marr

Some of these I have done basic research on. (Which sounds good; but editors do basic "research" by picking up the phone and asking colleagues questions in what is intended to be a brusque and commanding manner.) For instance, there have been no new CJD cases reported recently; but scientists and doctors are now, I'm told, very cautious and wary of media hype. Some of the suggestions that have come in reminded me of stories I too had forgotten. For instance, Dave Excell of Bracknell mentioned the Real World Coalition of interest groups. A few months ago, you may remember, they were offering a sort of non-party alternative

Hitler had the best admen: nasty 'creatives' whose designs and slogans worked better than anything dreamed up in Wardour St

political leadership. What has happened since? I don't know; but with this eternal election campaign getting under way, it seems a good moment to ask. Then there is Lockerbie. The father of one of those killed on Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988 writes that the story is not over: "If it were all cleared up by now; if the truth had been made public; if the perpetrators identified, tried and found guilty; lessons learned and applied about aviation security, about the treatment of relatives and victims of disasters... then relatives would carry on with their private grieving, knowing that the public interest had been largely served. But none of these conditions has been adequately met."

QUOTE UNQUOTE

I'm far too indiscreet to conduct a secret liaison. I'd get found out in five minutes. I'd rather read a book - Diana Quick, *actress*. This will be the dulllest encounter of your life. I'm a nightmare. Cantankerous. Tetchy. I'll either ramble or shut up - Clive James, *TV personality, to a would-be interviewer*.

For Christ's sake, don't say anything as pompous as that. Only one thing happens to those who guard flames: they get their bottoms burnt - Adrian Noble, *director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, when asked if he regarded himself as a worthy guardian of the Shakespearean flame*.

To the Italians, fashion is about making money, not pretty clothes. British designers never get past the cottage-industry set-up - Jeff Gribbin, *fashion designer*.

I suppose I should start tonight by saying how the devil are you? - Tony Blair, *joking about the Tories' devil eyes poster campaign*.

You get thinner-skinned, not thicker-skinned as you get older. I am not a brilliant exponent of the stiff upper lip - Jonathan Miller, *opera director*.

It is impossible to regard a cow who has just died in front of you purely as a vehicle for converting grass into hamburgers - Clive Aslet, *editor of 'Country Life'*.

You would have to be a blind man on a galloping horse not to see it - Paul McCartney, *former Beatle, on the similarity in the sound of the Fab Four and Bripop sensation Oasis*.

Battle lines drawn on abortion law

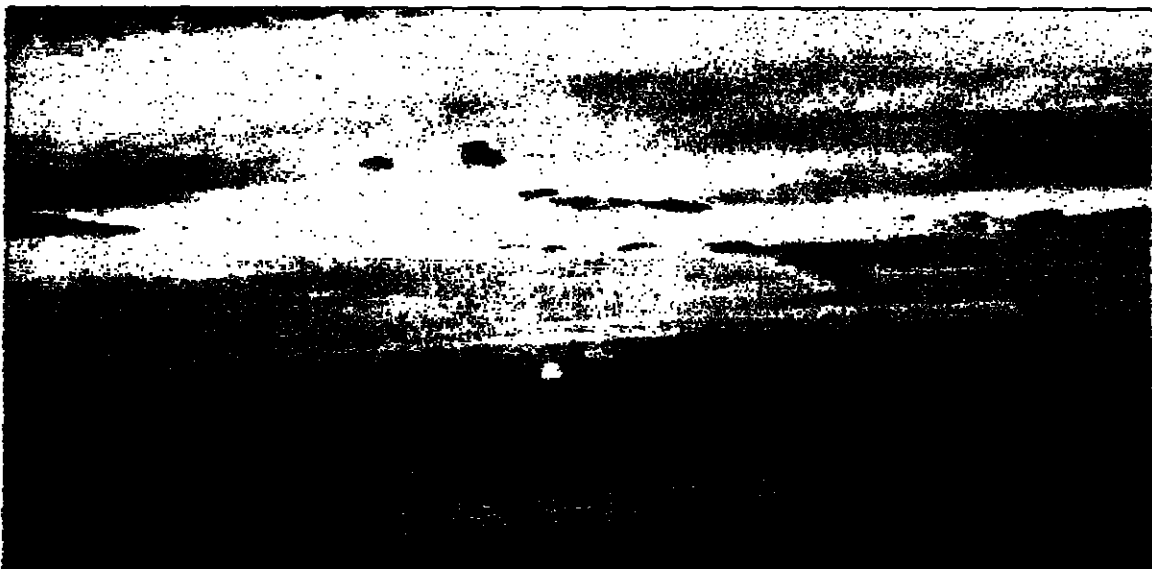
Sir: We are outraged that anti-abortion MPs are yet again planning to attack abortion legislation this autumn. The idea that the general public are now demanding new laws to restrict abortion, as Ann Winterton MP suggests, is misguided.

An increasing number of people agree that pregnant women should have the right to choose whether or not to continue with their pregnancy (81 per cent, Mori, August 1996). Far from being too liberal, the 1967 Abortion Act did not give women the right to choose and only allows abortions on certain limited grounds. The final decision on each abortion is made by two doctors.

In contrast to this, most countries in Europe, including most recently Poland, offer women abortion on request up to twelve weeks (when over 90 per cent of abortions are carried out anyway). The anti-choice lobby are saying that the 1967 Act

should be "tightened up" when really they believe that all abortion should be made illegal, an argument that they have lost over and over again. The UK abortion law does not need to be more restrictive; it needs to be completely revised to give women the abortion rights they have won elsewhere.

DAWN PRIMAROLO MP (Bristol South, Lab)
DIANE ABBOTT MP (Hackney North and Stoke Newington, Lab)
TERESA GORMAN MP (Billerica, C)
WENDY SAVAGE FROOG
GLENYS KINNOCK MEP (South Wales East, Lab)
Dr GERMAINE GREER
JANET SUZMAN
SARAH DUNANT
ANNA RAEBURN
ANNE MARIE KEARY
Chair, National Abortion Campaign
London E8



Sir: I don't know about Southwold (letters, 31 August), but there certainly are places on the east coast, such as Whitby, where one can watch the "sun slide into the sea" in summer (see enclosed

photograph). In the summer the sun sets in the north-west and many places on the east coast of England face north. ANNE WRIGHT, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland

Police work to eradicate sexism

Sir: There is sexism in the police and it should be eradicated (report, 3 September). However, our members are drawn from society and our attitudes reflect society as a whole.

Indeed, as officers have become better educated and better trained, there is a feeling that we are ahead of the game compared with most other walks of life. I have heard more than one tale of an initiation ceremony when a young male has found himself in a predominantly female workplace. This is not a justification for sexism but the problem is not peculiar to the police nor to male environments.

To imply that no woman is safe in a police station is a slur on thousands of men who have dedicated their lives to making life safer for everyone. I was twice saved from serious injury by a quick-thinking and courageous woman colleague. Sexism is not just nasty, it's plain daft. Detective Constable PETER SAVAGE
Chesham, Surrey

War or peace

Sir: Could not one Eurofighter be sacrificed to pay for one entire children's hospital threatened with closure in Derby? (Reports, 3 September.)

MARY HARRIS
E-mail: teumha@ipec.ac.uk

Stop politicians making up the rules as they go along

Sir: Sir Christopher Foster's article ("The trouble with conviction", 2 September) highlights the undeniable fact that there are more government mistakes than there used to be. The list in Foster's first paragraph should have found room at least for some past mistakes such as the Child Support Act - and why omit the poll tax? But the problem is not entirely rooted in post-1979 conviction politics. Previous Labour and Conservative governments had succeeded in bungling education, industrial policy and much else, however consensual their approaches.

The deeper problem was - and remains - the absence of a proper rule-book for the conduct of state business. The British have delighted in inventing games - all of them with strict rules guaranteeing equal chances for all players. Only in the most important game of all - politics - have we thought it reasonable to allow the leading players to make up the rules as they go along.

Our history, of which our governing class is so proud, should have taught us that once you prevent the expression of dissent you inevitably start to make mistakes. We need to do

much more than fiddle with the Cabinet committee structure to put things right. We need an impartial Civil Service which owes its allegiance to the people through Parliament. A Civil Service Act would place the Civil Service on a statutory footing, and remind us all that one of their most important functions is to underpin our democratic freedoms. Such legislation would also prevent this or any future government dismantling, disregarding or politicising it. ANDREW FUDGEHATT
Director, Charter 88
London EC1

Confused creed of the modern Pagans

Sir: People are entitled to practise whatever religion they like, but to say that the growth of Paganism on Britain's campuses (report, August 29) represents a return to the country's oldest religion is misleading. "Paganism" is not traditionally, the name of a particular creed, but a catch-all term to denote the religious practices of pre-literate peoples. Neither the ancient Britons nor the Anglo-Saxons left any record of their religious beliefs and practices. Modern "pagans" seem to pick and choose whatever takes their fancy, celebrating Beltane (a Celtic festival)

and Yule (a Saxon one), worshipping at Stonehenge (which the Celts didn't) but not going in for animal, let alone human, sacrifice, which is one thing we know from the writings of Roman historians did figure largely in the religion of the ancient Celtic peoples.

Those who want to discredit modern Paganism could do so more effectively by challenging its pretensions to antiquity than by spreading rumours of Satanic and drug-taking rituals. FRANCES H KILLINGLEY
Colchester

Logical smokescreen

Sir: How unfortunate for Mr Turner of the Tobacco Manufacturers' Association that he should write (Letters, 5 September) in the week that your DIY University instructs us in logic and ethics. Readers newly expert in logic will have no difficulty in seeing through his proposition that if some succeed in "giving up" without artificial aids, therefore smoking is not addictive. After all, if it wasn't, "giving up" wouldn't come into it; people would just smoke, now and then, for enjoyment, and stop, now and then. TIM BELDEN
Wells, Somerset

William Morris's neglected grave

Sir: I would like David James (Letters, 31 August) to know that over the last two months I have been studying biographical details of William Morris, and I am fully aware of this great man's ideals. The object of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, which he founded in 1877, was to preserve historic buildings and oppose fashionable restoration of churches - in no way was it directed at gravestones in churchyards.

During William Morris's centenary year there has been great activity in sales of related merchandise in shops attached to art galleries and museums, and I think it is deplorable that in 1996 the memorial of Britain's greatest designer of the Arts and Crafts Movement should be a subsiding burial site. DOROTHY BILLCIFFE
Broadway, Hereford and Worcester

Marvellous Mark

Sir: If both the answers to T Tirkson's questions are yes (letter, 4 September), and Bridget Jones accepts his proposal, then I would like to point out that I'd be more than happy to give Mark Darcy all the comfort he needs to help him recover from her rejection. CAROL-ANNE RODGSON
New Malden, Surrey

saturday story

A weekend lesson in self-help

While white children take the day off, some black children are back at school today – and getting results. Celia Dodd reports

It's 10am on a wet Saturday in Handsworth, Birmingham's least-loved district. Children between the ages of three and 14, whom you would expect to be at home glued to the box, are trooping into a shabby club-cum-community centre which every Saturday transforms itself into a school.

The only white faces are my own and the photographer's. The 104 – the centre is named after its address – is organised by the Afro-Caribbean community for its children. Like other supplementary schools whose numbers are mushrooming all over the inner cities, it is run on a self-help basis for and by parents who believe that Britain's schools are failing their children. Their belief was confirmed by the publication this week of a report by Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, which found that, over the past 10 years, "African Caribbean young people, especially boys, have not shared equally in the increasing rates of achievement" attained by some other ethnic minority groups.

104's parents come from a wide range of backgrounds. One woman, a recently qualified social worker, explains why she started bringing her 11-year-old son and five-year-old daughter, who both attend a local Roman Catholic primary: "I didn't feel my daughter was being taught very well. She could read before she started school and she was assessed as being at a six-year-old level. But the minute she went to school she started regressing. I was so upset that I told the head I felt the school was failing my child; she didn't agree. Since coming to Saturday school my daughter has made a lot of progress, and now we're starting to get positive feedback from her primary school."

On the other side of the table, a young woman is filling in a form to register her three children: "At their primary school, if I ask about bringing home a reading book the teacher fobs me off. Everything my six-year-old has learned, I've taught him, or he's picked up from the older ones. I've been to a few Saturday schools and they suggest you work with the children on certain things. Discipline is better too, and that in itself builds their confidence."

In the draughty makeshift classrooms, children and teachers keep their bulky jackets zipped and their hoods up. Funds don't stretch to more than a fan heater and it's decidedly chilly. Upstairs, in a staffroom lined with portraits of Marcus Garvey and Nelson Mandela, teachers, many of whom are untrained, anxiously discuss the need to increase parents' financial contributions because funding from the City Council has just been cut. Parents currently pay £1.30 a week: "cheaper than dance lessons," as one dad cheerfully admits. But parents on Income Support will find the increase harder to stomach.

Teachers and other helpers do not get paid. So why do they do it? Hugh Genesis, who teaches maths up to GCSE, was an ambulance man until he heard 104's request for teachers on the local pirate radio station. He's now doing teacher training. In the classroom next door, Tukimbo, a training development officer during the week, is teaching 11- to 13-year-olds about Malcolm X. "Why

do I do it? I asked myself that question this morning. It is a lot on top of the working week. I've got two children and it does cause problems with my wife. When I first started I was doing a teaching degree. Basically I do it because I enjoy working with children."

There are now over 30 supplementary schools in Birmingham; more than half have been set up within the past three years. It is a pattern repeated all over Britain's inner-cities, where minority communities of different ethnic origin organise Saturday schools which seek to raise standards as well as reflect their own culture.

The 104 is one of the oldest supplementary schools in the country. It was set up in the 60s when concern about the under-achievement of black children was beginning to grow, but long before under-achievement had become a matter of concern across the board. A succession of government reports highlighted the issue, but few of their recommendations were ever implemented.

Despite a long and honourable tradition, Saturday schools are largely invisible to the rest of the population. In contrast to the standard solutions for white parents dissatisfied with education – private tuition, private schooling, or moving house – supplementary schools are accessible to all incomes. And at the grassroots level they are tackling many of the problems dogging mainstream education: motivating the children who see no point in learning, improving behaviour and involving parents.

Yvonne Mosquito, 104's coordinator, says: "We're about helping the children to stay in the education system. We teach them that they have a history, that they can make a contribution, that they have potential, and that whatever they want to be they can be. But they must work hard at school, they must have manners and respect for the teachers." Her proudest memory is of one of her first pupils, a disruptive teenager called Scotty: "Every teacher, including me, had such problems with him – we'd send him home, call his mother in. But he ended up doing an HND and he's got a management job with the AA now. I'm prouder of him than I am of any other pupil in our school because he was a hard, hard child."

What do mainstream educators make of supplementary schools? Surely their existence is a glaring reminder of failure? Professor Tim Brighouse, head of Birmingham City Council's education department, disagrees. "No school can succeed with every child by themselves – they need support from parents and from the community. Supplementary schools are conveying a message to young people that education and learning really matter." But some teachers, like Avtar Mangat, head of a junior school in the heart of Handsworth, are less enthusiastic. About six of his pupils go to Afro-Caribbean Saturday schools. "Supplementary schools should be for all children, not just open to one community," he says. "Raising self-esteem can be productive, but it can also be counter-productive if it means the children start to have a negative relationship with other groups in the community. And if the teaching processes differ from the main school, that could create problems for the child."



Pupils at the '104' supplementary school in Handsworth, Birmingham. Their parents believe their schools are failing them

Photograph: News Team

'My headmaster said we were no-hopers'

Dominic Carrington, 25, went to a comprehensive in south London and Saturday school in Croydon before taking a law degree. He is now a pupil barrister in London chambers.

I feel I was underestimated at school. The teachers were surprised by my O-Level grades, which were among the best in the year.

At the Saturday school there was more one-to-one attention and a more helpful attitude. If I had a specific problem with work it would be dealt with, whereas at school you felt you were wasting everyone else's time. I felt more comfortable at the Saturday school; people wanted to be there.

At school, all the black pupils in our year used to go around in a big gang during the break. There were about 25 of us in the third year; by the fifth year, that had dwindled by about half. Most of those had been excluded.

The teachers were struggling so hard to find a way of dealing with us that they brought in an Afro-Caribbean advisor. I found out later that the headmaster told her to forget about the fifth year because we were no-hopers, and to concentrate on the younger ones.

There was trouble, and there were maybe a few troublesome individuals, but it was blown out of all proportion – it wasn't as if the gang went around terrorising the school or taking everyone's dinner money. Probably the worst thing that happened was someone getting the mickey taken out of them: there was no violence. I think some of my mates got labelled as troublemakers and they sort of fell in with the label.

I know there were a lot of students with just as much talent as myself who didn't have my push and so they didn't do well in their exams. Saturday school would have helped them because it would have given them that added

push. They weren't thick. They just didn't get the help they needed.

I was suspended myself for "disrupting" a class twice in one day. My mother was upset and it was hard to explain that it was for such a silly reason. I thought a suspension would be for hitting a teacher, or extremely disruptive behaviour, but this was just me talking to another pupil. Everyone else was talking but I got picked out.

I took the suspension quite harshly, and I could see how it might affect others more. But I was determined to get good grades because my whole aim since Junior school was to be a barrister. I got three Cs at A-Level.

My teachers thought I wasn't going to do it. They said I should really think again, that I should look into whether there was any other job I could do. At Saturday school the attitude was, "you can do it". There was more encouragement, definitely.

'We had a laugh, but we worked hard too'

The New Cross Supplementary School in south-east London was set up 11 years ago with no outside funding; it now receives a grant from Lewisham Council. Its five teachers are all graduates; three are qualified teachers. All pupils who stay the course go on to further education.

Natalie Bailey, 24, went to a local comprehensive in south London, but from the ages of 11 to 16, the most effective part of her education came from the New Cross School. She graduated with a BSc in biochemistry from Greenwich University last summer, and now teaches at New Cross. Her father was a bus conductor; her mother works for social services.

Getting up on Saturday morning was the worst part – once you got to school it was OK. I enjoyed it because you met completely different people from school. There was a more relaxed atmosphere. We had a joke and a laugh, but we worked hard too. There was more one-on-one teaching, which meant that everyone who needed help got it.

Saturday School was an added bonus, not extra help for slow learners. I had a good understanding of maths, so they used to set work which was slightly harder to help me move on. The cultural aspect was important too; I'm not saying it's not important to learn about Anne Boleyn,

but it's also important to know your roots.

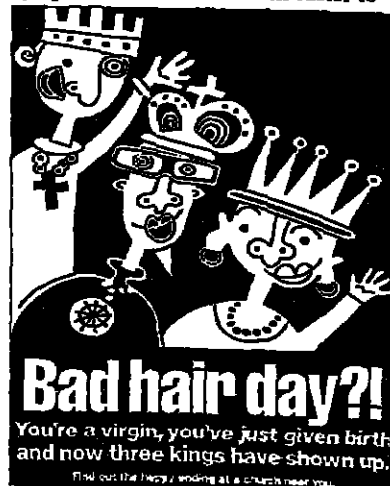
I always wanted to go on to further education and Saturday School gave me the confidence to believe I could. At school the teachers weren't so willing to push. It was, "Well, maybe ... it's really hard ..." – they were more negative than positive. I once got 87 per cent in a biology exam and the teacher gave me a B grade; another pupil who had got 57 per cent got an A. When I complained, the teacher said: "Oh Natalie, what's the difference between an A and a B?" To me there was a difference. At Saturday school they made us know – not just think – we could achieve what we wanted.

Jo Brand's week



dull, interminable and of very little relevance to contemporary life.

Some psychologists at Harvard have actually taken the time to research what sort of classical music babies like, perhaps because some of them might take it into their heads to pop along to the Royal Festival Hall for the odd concert. Strangely enough babies do not like modern classical music much. Neither do most of the rest of us. Mozart, however, is a big hit with the nappy brigade, so maybe it's time to persuade parents to buy a few classical symphonies. I'd find it much easier to



Bad hair day?!

You're a virgin, you've just given birth, and now three kings have shown up. Mind your language: a Church ad

cope with a few Wolfgangs running about than the rather frightening proliferation of Kylies.

An American postman has been jailed recently, and quite rightly so, for secretly filming girls as young as three on the beach. Obviously, as the judge pointed out, this is an infringement of privacy and very unseemly into the bargain. It's reassuring to know that the rights of young girls are protected in this way. Perhaps they'd better appreciate it while they can, because once these girls grow up and wear anything which reveals bare flesh, anyone is completely at liberty to film them. Conversely, in Minehead, residents have had enough of unattractive working-class people baring vast acres of flesh and wobbling around what they consider to be a classy resort. A cover-up has been called for. I wonder what the legal situation would be if you were a fat working-class adolescent girl with a swimming costume on in Minehead and someone filmed you. You decide.

Having always been about as keen on flying as I am on competitive sprinting, I worry about news items like the one about the jumbo jet flying from South Africa which got caught in a lightning storm. I attended a flying phobias day at Heathrow a while ago and the pilot who was employed to still our heating advertisers for much of the ignorance about flying, because so many companies portray planes cruising smoothly and majestically through the sky without a hint of turbulence. This statement kept me going for quite a while and I have learned to push my heart back down my throat when we start rattling about. However, plummeting thousands of feet in seconds and ending up in the luggage rack would have been far too much for me – not to mention the luggage rack. Back to the pre-flight twelve mogadon and six large brandies. I think.



Topical, Not Tropical

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Issued by the NEWSPRINT & NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION GROUP

How reassuring to know that in the world of showbiz, romance is not completely dead. Speculation abounds in the tabloids about whether Demi Moore is pregnant again, as she is pictured weighing about three ounces more than she normally does. Hubby Bruce Willis wants a boy, probably so he doesn't look daft playing Scarecrow on his own. In fact he wants a boy so much, rumour has it that he will give Demi three and a half million quid as a reward if she produces a man child. This all smacks a bit of Henry VIII to me, although if Demi falls to produce, I don't suppose her head will be separated from her neck. Fingers crossed anyway, Demi.

Looking round the world, one could be forgiven for thinking that we haven't moved on since medieval times. In Kenya this week, the head of the Roman Catholic Church presided over a public burning of condoms and sex education literature. (Yum, bet that smelled good). The Cardinal was flanked by a pair of gynaecologists (as opposed to a couple of witchfinders), but in a country in which AIDS is rife, it seems that this lot are encouraging vast numbers of individuals to meet their maker much earlier than is necessary.

One great thing about working with comics is that from time to time they come up with some wonderful stories. I was in Southend the other night working with a friend, Mike Hayley, who recounted a very satisfying scene a friend of his had witnessed in a supermarket. It involved a very irritating child of four or so, who kept pushing a shopping trolley into an old lady in front of him, while his mother completely ignored the woman's obvious discomfort. Enter a man who challenged the mother about her son's behaviour and was told: "We never discipline him because we think that's



Bruce and Demi: fingers crossed

wrong." At this point the man took a large tub of yoghurt from his trolley, took the lid off and poured the contents over the child's head. "I was brought up that way as well," he said. "Great isn't it?"

There's been some controversy about a new batch of posters attempting to attract younger people into the Church. The posters have used language which, it was felt, would appeal more to young people. But apparently, the more traditional Christians have not been pleased by phrases like "bad hair day" – not to mention what they consider to be a rather flippant summing-up of the Nativity story. This is the problem with the Church. For want of a better phrase, it is so holier-than-thou. I've always thought God probably doesn't give a toss about the sort of language you use, providing you don't go round torturing animals or battering your neighbours. The main obstacle for young people in the Church is not the initial advertising dilemma, but surely the point at which they actually arrive at church to discover that services are

كلنا من الادل

Time for real Euro democracy

The dream of a fully accountable European Union is far from being realised, says John Lichfield

How accountable is the European Union? Example: A House of Commons committee is furious with Whitehall and furious with Brussels. The Select Committee on European Legislation, which is supposed to scrutinise EU laws, complains that the government is first frustrating, and then ignoring, its work. The charge is denied by Whitehall but there is a strong case to answer. The committee also complains that the European Commission is slow in providing official English texts of its proposals. The charge is denied in Brussels; but, again, there is a case to answer.

Just another tedious Euro-squabble? Not really. It raises a very large issue - in some ways the largest single European issue - the democracy and openness and accountability of the European Union. These are deep and murky waters where many things are not quite what they seem. Consider three interlocking paradoxes:

Paradox One: the EU was created to sustain democratic values. But it is not, in itself, fully democratic: it legislates in secret meetings at some distance from the voice of the electorate. Despite lip service from member governments, and promises in the Maastricht Treaty, and rulings by the European Court, this is getting worse, not better. Why? Because most member governments - and especially the British - like it that way.

Paradox Two: the EU is accused by the sceptics of sucking power and sovereignty into an amorphous, quasi-federal Europe. Less noticed is another

fact, identified by Alan Butt Philip in a recent pamphlet for the John Stuart Mill Institute. The EU builds up the power of national executives and national bureaucracies, at the expense of national parliaments and national electorates. How? The need to satisfy 15 EU viewpoints means legislation by government-to-government negotiation - mostly civil service to civil service negotiation - not by debate. Decisions taken by governments in Brussels are presented to the House of Commons as *faits accomplis*. As the Select Committee report shows, the procedures which exist for consultation before EU decisions are reached are widely circumvented or ignored.

Paradox Three: drawing attention to the democratic deficit of the EU is not, properly speaking, a Euro-sceptic cause. It is a Euro-positive - even, potentially, a Euro-federalist cause.

Increasing the democracy and accountability of European institutions would increase respect and understanding for the EU. The present system is a breeding ground for Euro-suspicion and Euro-paranoia. More specifically, democracy and transparency in European decision-making would sluice away many of the back-door deals and secret trade-offs, by which EU governments tend to negotiate and legislate. The effect would be to increase the influence and power of central EU institutions but also, essentially, the influence and power of national parliaments.

The EU has 23 ways of making decisions (which is, in itself, part of the problem). But the core EU legislative

process has three main players. The European Commission initiates and drafts legislation. The European Parliament comments on it and can, in certain circumstances, force amendments. The final decisions - and the ultimate power, the legislative forum of the member governments, the heart of the democratic problem in the EU is the Council of Ministers.

In a sense, the Council is democratic. It represents the collective will of member governments which, in turn,

Drawing attention to the democratic deficit of the EU is not, properly speaking, a Euro-sceptic cause.

reflect the opinion of national parliaments and national electorates. But this is democracy at one or two removes. The Council of Ministers meets in secret; it does not publish its agenda; it does not publish its minutes. The *Independent* revealed last year that those minutes sometimes amend, or even directly contradict, the published version of the decisions reached. Negotiating bottlenecks are removed by giving member states under-the-counter exemptions or special deals.

Several (but not all national) parliaments insist on their right to scrutinise all EU legislation before the decision stage. In theory, in Britain's case, the government is not supposed to take a decision until the Select Committee on European Legislation has given scrutiny clearance. This rule is frequently broken. Many national parliaments hardly bother to scrutinise EU proposals at all.

But what of the European Parliament, directly elected every five years since 1979? Does it not reduce the EU democratic deficit? Yes, up to a point. Its modestly-increased seriousness as an institution - have created a useful role as a public watchdog and early warning system. But the cutting edge of representative democracy is the making of laws and, in the EU, the Council of Ministers makes the laws. Unreconstructed federalists may pine for the day when the European Parliament enacts laws for a central European government. But until that happens (which is likely to be never) a direct injection of people-power is needed elsewhere in the system.

A number of ideas are knocking around; some of them are being discussed in the present rolling, inter-governmental conference on EU reform. It has been suggested that the European Parliament should have a second chamber or Senate, made up of delegations from national parliaments. It has been suggested that the Council of Ministers could itself become a kind of Senate, with two or three permanent delegates of ministerial rank from member governments (which is how the US Senate began).

None of this is likely to happen. No matter. What is really needed is more boring and basic.

The Council of Ministers should publish its agenda, its minutes and its voting records. Under-the-counter deals should be outlawed. There should be a clear and uniform system for the scrutiny of draft legislation by national parliaments. Documents must be provided in good time. As suggested by the House of Commons committee, it should be illegal for the EU to take a decision unless each national parliament has had a reasonable opportunity to scrutinise the proposal and advise its government.

Many objections can be raised. Secret deals are the oil which makes the present already creaking EU system work. A more democratic system, without the present short-cuts, would be much more cumbersome. A public council of ministers would drive much of the real negotiation into corridors.

These are genuine problems but they are not reason enough to allow the EU to remain impervious, unaccountable and misunderstood. This is also a formula for EU stasis or gradual collapse. MPs should take up the flag raised by their select committee. Democracy is a Euro-cause worth fighting for. But, Eurosceptics beware. If you win, you are likely to strengthen the EU (despite itself) not to weaken it.

"Accountability in the European Union, 26 John Stuart Mill Institute, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE."

DAVID AARONOVITCH

Prescient pets



This is the story of how I discovered that my guinea pig never loved me. Her name was Bathsheba and she was covered in white and brown angora fleece. I was ten. For six months Bathsheba never came when I called, refused to join in any of those fun games and experiments that I and my brother devised for her, and generally took no interest in me. I was very upset, but for decades I consoled myself with the belief that she behaved this way because that was the way that guinea pigs behaved.

Until this week, when research appeared to show that pets - far from being dumb - are both psychic and telepathic. A conference at Cambridge University's veterinary school - beginning even as you read this - will hear of case after case of extraordinary behaviour on the part of animals; behaviour which conventional science is hard-put to explain. There was Bobbie the collie, who travelled three thousand miles across the United States to find his owner; there was Jaytee the terrier, always excited by the imminent arrival of his mistress, no matter how unpredictable that arrival was; there was the Mynah bird who squawked when the son of the family was coming home from boarding school ("the bird had a great rapport with my son, Robert", said the head of the house); there were the telephone answering discs, who only picked up the receiver for certain people; there was Lisa the embassy dog, who warned the ambassador to China of an impending earthquake, thus saving much life; there were the dogs who howled when their masters died on other continents; there was the American Internet subscriber whose llama, Dancer, used to defecate in the wrong place, until one day, "I sent Dancer [mental] pictures of him going in another part of the yard and within one day, he started to go there!"

All this is, of course, pretty persuasive evidence of the extraordinary and unexpected powers of pets. As the Times put it on Thursday, "scientists have proved that dogs can read human minds". It is hardly surprising then, that everyone concerned with this research seems to have concentrated purely on the "upside implications" of their findings.

But consider. If dogs and

cats and mynahs and llamas are capable of these wonderful things, how then do we explain all the times that they do not behave psychically or telepathically?

Presumably all those notices tacked to trees lamenting a missing moggy or a lost pup, are completely redundant. The animals concerned are either dead, or simply don't want to come back. The cat that will not answer the phone, even when you're on the loo and it's important, is refusing out of malice, apathy, or an unpleasant feline sense of humour.

What about the dog who does not go for help when you lie broken-legged in a field, but

Millions of pampered animals have utterly failed to give warnings of natural disasters

trots home, eats its Pedigree Chum and goes to sleep? It must really hate you. The pooch who craps in front of your front gate is more than aware of your anguish at his actions - but he doesn't give a shit. No matter that you are sending him mental pictures in which he relieves himself on his slimeball of a master's duvet.

Worst of all are those millions of pampered animals who have utterly failed - despite their knowledge of what is about to happen - to give warnings of natural disasters, and whose masters have duly and horribly perished in crashes, floods, volcanic eruptions and fights with aggrieved husbands. If they were human they would be prosecuted for negligence or cruelty.

So the scales have dropped from my eyes. Bathsheba knew all too well that I wanted her to climb the joined-up toilet roll tubes, negotiate the pillow-maze and walk through the Lego house. She also realised that this was an important part of learning development. But she wouldn't do it. She didn't love me. For she was an animal, and - as this research now clearly proves - most animals are selfish bastards.

Yes, it's Birt: yes, it works

Faced with the cut-throat economies of global TV, John Birt is the BBC's best hope for survival.
By Bill Robinson



The Director-General of the BBC is making waves - again. First he calls for an increase in the licence fee. Then we learn that he plans to hive off BBC Resources. It has been a busy time again for the man already reviled for introducing Producer Choice and trying to ruin the BBC World Service.

His enemies like to paint John Birt as a man bent on destroying the BBC. In fact the changes he is making represent the best hope of preserving the tradition of public service broadcasting in an increasingly difficult environment.

The immediate challenge faced by the BBC is the need to invest in new digital technology. The problem here is that the BBC operates on an annual budget which is not geared to cope with one-off large investments caused by technical change. For the BBC's competitors this is not a problem. Investing in television technology is an economically viable business proposition, on which banks are willing to lend. However because the BBC is in the public sector it is severely restricted in its borrowing ability.

This leaves the BBC with an awkward choice. It can use licence fee money to invest in the latest equipment to the probable detriment of programmes; or it can preserve programme excellence by taking a Luddite approach to technical change. That is unthinkable for an organisation which has always taken as much pride in its engineering as in its programming excellence.

The plan to spin off the technical side of the BBC's activities into separate business units offers a way out of this dilemma. If the BBC goes into partnership with companies in the private sector it can borrow, under the government's Private Finance Initiative, what it needs to stay at the technological frontier. So BBC programme makers get access to the latest digital technology, but the licence payer doesn't have to provide the capital cost of putting it in place.

Another consequence of the spin-off will be to sharpen the incentives to greater efficiency in programme production. The programme makers would compare the costs of BBC Resources with those on offer in the private sector. And any investment by BBC Resources in new facilities would have to be justified by the prospective returns.

There are obvious analogies between this proposal and what has been happening in the Health Service. The buzzword is the purchaser/provider split. The government is committed to buying health services and making them available free to the user, but that does not

mean it has to build the hospitals or employ all the caterers, etc, who work in them.

The same is true of the BBC. It is committed to using licence payers' money to make and buy programmes which are then transmitted free on air. Hiving off BBC Resources will not change this central fact. It may mean that some part of the programme-making process will be carried out in the private sector rather than by a BBC employee. But the licence fee will still be used to purchase the material for which the BBC is famous - comprehensive and impartial news and current affairs, expensive costume dramas, programmes which cater for minorities, etc.

Worries that spinning off BBC Resources will turn the BBC gradually into a privatised American-style broadcaster are completely misplaced. On the contrary, the spin-off could achieve the best of both worlds: public purchase to guarantee standards, private provision to maximise efficiency and minimise waste of the licence fee.

Although the digital revolution is an important spur to the latest changes at the BBC, the underlying problems faced by the corporation are older and deeper. They concern the ever rising cost of buying the programmes with mass appeal, which the BBC needs to get good overall ratings, and which in turn are needed to make the licence fee politically acceptable.

This problem is well recognised inside the industry, but barely understood outside. The

obvious example is sport, a mainstay of BBC programming. In the old days of the cosy duopoly with ITV, sport could be relied on to deliver large audiences for relatively low outlays. People were used to watching sport on BBC and historically the television rights to big sporting events were sold cheaply. BBC and ITV negotiators could argue that they were benefiting the sport by giving it free publicity. The sports bodies had not woken up to the enormous value of their product.

That all changed with the advent of Sky TV. Rupert Murdoch was very quick to realise the huge power of exclusive sports coverage and has bid aggressively for the rights to major events, notably football. The rapid growth of Sky is bringing its total revenues close to those of BBC television. With no public service obligations and much smaller overheads it now regularly outbids the BBC for the right to sporting events.

As a result the BBC finds itself in another difficult dilemma. If it tries to hang on to its traditional sporting strongholds, it could end up spending so much money on buying the rights that it risks diluting the quality of the rest of its output. But if it lets the sport go, its audience share could drop sharply, making it difficult to sustain, let alone increase, the licence fee.

The BBC is now competing, when it bids for the crowd-pleasers, against other broadcasters who can extract, in hard cash, the full commercial value of those programmes. At present the

main threat comes from Sky, to whom football in particular is enormously valuable as a way of selling additional subscriptions. But in the not-too-distant future, the spread of specialist channels and pay-per-view will enable other commercial broadcasters to sell popular programmes for their full value. They will thus be able to outbid the BBC for the talent which goes into making those programmes.

The BBC's unique ability to transmit relatively cheap popular programmes to keep up its ratings and help subsidise the more expensive minority programmes is thus under serious threat, now and for the foreseeable future. It is that, rather than the radical changes implemented under the Birt regime, which threatens the survival of the BBC as we know it.

The truth is that the Birt proposals represent the Corporation's best hope of survival in a rapidly changing television industry. The BBC's decline can be arrested only by a combination of aggressive control of costs (which is unpopular with those who make television programmes) and increases in the real value of the licence fee (which is unpopular with those who watch them). That is what Mr Birt's recent pronouncements have been about. They will not make him popular, but history will show that he is right.

The writer is a director of the consultancy London Economics.

Celebrating the fresh face of Urban Decay

Sandy Lerner has a passion for purple - and not just because it is sometimes the colour of her waist-length hair. At 40, the computer nerd who made a mint (\$200m actually) out of her Silicon Valley company Cisco Systems is one of those women who enjoys the odd bout of mediaeval jousting and riding a Harley. But then she discovered that the world had a purple problem.

"I got my horse trainer Pat turned on to alternative dressing. Pat's a purple person, so if she was going to be alternative, she was going to need purple nails. But we couldn't find the right shade," says Lerner. "Why are there 500 pinks and no greens or purples? There are a lot of people out there."

Thus was born Urban Decay - Lerner's

alternative make-up company that is about "seeing and appreciating the beauty in the urban world around us." Its slogan is "Does Pink Make You Puke?"

Colours include Uzi (dark grey), Roach (dark brown), Frostbite (blue-black) and Pigeon (no description needed). Smog is not only beautiful, it is to die for, as is Rust, Oil Slick and Road Stripe. For purple there is Bruise, Asphyxia, Plague, Gangrene or Pallor. New colours include Gash and Shattered ("the colour of a smashed-in windshield").

"Bruise used to be our best seller. Now it's Shattered," says Sandy Langman of the Future store in Portland, Oregon, whose Mildew nails are set off by a tartan skirt and cowboy boots. Langman figures Chanel started it all with

Vamp - probably the only fingernail polish ever to make the news on CNN. It was Uma's fingerprint in *Pulp Fiction*, and unit for unit it is Chanel's best-selling product ever. It was sold here, or more accurately, sold out, as Rouge Noir. But this autumn Britain gets to sample Metallic Vamp and Very Vamp.

Urban Decay wants to rattle the very idea of what is beautiful, and perhaps it's on to something here. Paint companies could use a brush with reality too. Who would want Primrose Yellow in the kitchen if you could buy Chip Grease? What about Rising Damp, Mouse Droppings or Water Stain? Imagine the colourways to explore with the likes of Migraine or Compost or Stig Trail. Cushion covers will never be the same. Forget truth

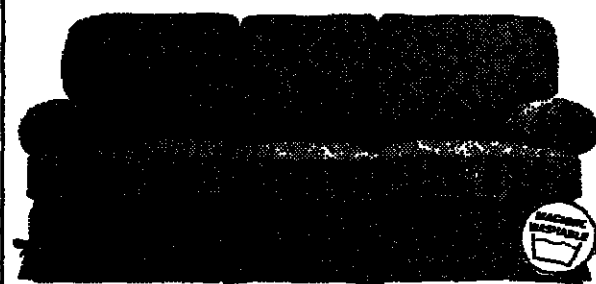
in advertising, prepare for the brutal truth. Don't miss colours for cars could include Asthma, Lead or Fatal Attraction.

But back to make-up. Sandy Lerner hates the Barbie Syndrome (the Urban Decay website is collecting Barbie Horror Stories) and believes she is doing something about it. "There are a lot of women frustrated with what the make-up companies want them to look like. Imagine wearing a business suit with Uzi fingernails. You can conform and have your little tantrum at the same time. A lot of investment bankers I know would lower their blood pressure 20 to 30 points if they had Smog fingernails."

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Watchdog hires auditors to check whether compensation should be paid in wake of scandal

Morgan facing claims avalanche from investors

NIC CICUTTI and JILL TREANOR

Morgan Grenfell, the fund management firm whose European funds are being investigated for fraud, could face an avalanche of compensation claims from past and present investors who may have lost money in the course of the past year.

Among those who may have valid claims are investors who have sold off more than £180m of their holdings in Morgan Grenfell unit trusts in the past two days, 14 per cent of their total value before trading was suspended earlier this week.

Claims could cover the period when Peter Young, the fund manager suspended by Morgan Grenfell, breached rules on the proportion of unlisted securities he was allowed to hold in the two unit trusts he was responsible for. This would permit former unit-holders who disposed of their holdings prior to the suspension of trusts at the beginning of the week to table claims.

The potential extent of claims came as Morgan Grenfell said redemptions, which reached £83m yesterday compared with a £100m self-off on

Thursday, appeared to be slowing down. A spokesman said: "We believe investors are getting the message there is no need to panic."

But he declined to speculate on whether the company believed self-offs would come to a halt next week.

The company yesterday sent letters to 85,000 investors in three trusts, including Europa, the one managed by Mr Young's colleague Stewart Armer, giving them information for the first time about what was happening to the funds.

A letter from Graham Kane, managing director of Morgan Grenfell Investment Funds, said: "I would like to make it clear from the outset that fund managers will meet all their liabilities in respect of any irregularities in the three funds."

"These possible irregularities relate to the value of certain unquoted securities in the three funds." If Morgan Grenfell were to meet compensation claims this would be in addition to the £180m stumped up by its owner, Deutsche Bank, the German banking giant, which bought from the trusts the questionable unlisted securities first acquired by Mr Young.

However, despite this cash injection, the company's letter to investors admitted that the price of the European Growth Trust fell by 3.75 per cent between Friday 30 August and noon on Thursday. The value of its Europa Fund dropped by 3.9 per cent over the same period.

Morgan Grenfell spokesman said the company was working closely with its regulator, Imro, to ensure unit-holders were properly compensated. The basis for compensation and the amounts would become clear in the next few weeks, as the full extent of Mr Young's activities are investigated.

Phillip Thorpe, chief executive at Imro, said the regulator was in process of appointing forensic accountants to go back and analyse the funds and determine whether compensation is payable.

He said if it appeared that the fund had been trading on false prices then that was a matter under which compensation would be payable by Morgan Grenfell. But Mr Thorpe added that it might take some time before the matter could be fully resolved.

Imro, as well as regulating



Phillip Thorpe, chief executive at Imro, said the regulator was appointing forensic accountants in the case

Photograph: Tony Buckingham

fund managers and their companies also supervises the trustees – the firms that provide the checks and balances of the fund management firms.

Mr Thorpe said the regulator might need to look again at its rules for trustees after the Morgan Grenfell debacle.

"It has to be accepted we will need to look at the way in which trustees and fund managers have interacted," he said.

General Accident was the trustee to both of the funds Mr Young managed until February and July this year. In theory, Imro could levy the same penalties against trustees as it could against fund managers – fines, expulsions or reprimands.

Mr Young is said by his employers to have defied orders to dispose of doubtful securities in his funds, many of them in high-risk Scandinavian firms, by sell-

ing them at a loss to Luxembourg holding companies he had himself created.

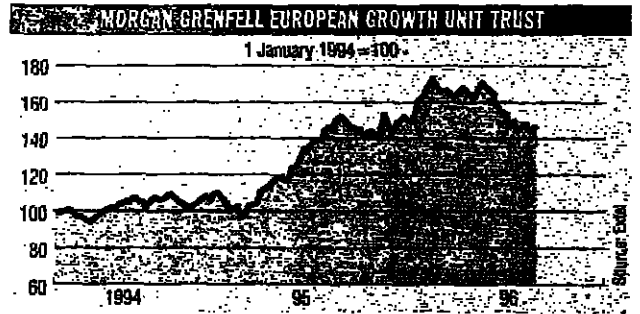
The two funds he managed, including the £800m Morgan Grenfell European Growth Unit Trust, suffered substantial losses from the fictitious sales, so that Mr Young could claim to have reduced holdings in unlisted stocks below the 10 per cent limit imposed by regulators.

Most legal experts believe that the least the company will try to do will be to offer redress on the basis of "tort", whereby unit-holders are returned to the position they were in before they invested their money. One lawyer said: "Compensation would be for losses arising from a breach of financial services regulations in relation to the rules on unlisted securities."

This could be done by working out what the fund might have been worth without the dubious investments. Those who could be entitled to claim included all those investing from the moment at which breaches occurred. This might include interest that might have been paid on any lump sum invested.

A lawyer said claims might be made on grounds that the company and Mr Young were in breach of contractual duties.

Comment, page 21



Rolf Breuer (left) of Deutsche Bank, is investigating the investments made by Peter Young

Green oasis dragged into a quagmire of fraud

Inquest begins

On 21 August, a team of securities and fund management regulators arrived at the Finsbury Circus offices of Morgan Grenfell's unit trust subsidiary, overlooking a green oasis in the heart of the City of London.

For the four previous months, they had been investigating the way shares in an obscure and highly speculative New Mexico oil exploration venture called Solv-Ex had been marketed in private placements to investors.

From that small beginning emerged the enormous scandal which has shaken the unit trust industry to its foundations this week.

The affair is threatening to drag the reputation of Morgan Grenfell through the mud again, as it was a decade ago in the wake of the Guinness share manipulation scandal.

The news was also an un-

welcome shock to its parent, the giant Deutsche Bank of Germany, which is already reeling from a two year succession of scandals and losses among German industrial companies where it is a large shareholder, from Metallgesellschaft to the Schneider building companies.

So far Deutsche Bank, which sent Rolf Breuer, a German main board director, over to London this week, has put up £180m to shore up the reputation of Morgan Grenfell's unit trust business, but the bill could rise by hundreds of millions if the City regulators decide that investors in the two London unit trusts and the Dublin investment fund which is also involved deserve compensation.

The fundamental problem unearthed by Imro, the invest-

ment management regulator that made the fateful visit alongside their counterparts from the Securities and Futures Authority, was deceptively simple. Some of the investments made by Peter Young, the manager in charge of two of the three funds, were worth less than they appeared in the books.

But when they looked further, they found an immensely complex series of transactions that can be traced back at least a year.

Mr Young appears to have been a prime mover in setting up a series of mysterious offshore companies which have been used to hide what he was doing with clients' money.

These companies have proved to be the ultimate owners of a substantial number of the investments in the funds Mr Young managed. But why did

go to such lengths to obscure what he was doing? It is possible that it all began as an excess of zeal.

Mr Young was a specialist in speculative technology-based companies. His expertise in this field was the foundation of his early success as a fund manager, taking the Morgan Grenfell unit trusts to the top of their league tables.

By all accounts he was a confident investor, sure of his own theories, but it is beginning to look as if he was prepared to go to any lengths to put them into practice. He believed that for every ten investments, even if four went bust the other six would be enough to pay off.

Unit trust industry rules, forbidding funds putting more than 10 per cent of their money into speculative stocks that do not have market quotations without special reason; furthermore, they are not allowed to buy

more than 10 per cent of the share capital of any individual company.

Mr Young was breaking these rules, building large stakes in companies he believed in, and massively exceeding the overall investment limit for unquoted companies.

One interpretation of what Mr Young did was that he knew what was best for his clients, and was prepared to break the regulations if necessary, hiding the fact from his superiors.

Clients would benefit if more of their money went into what – at the time – he thought were good bets. The solution was to hide the rule-breaking investments in the front companies.

This also helped hide his carefully picked stocks from the prying eyes of the market, which might have bid up the price once it knew where the

sector's top specialist was putting his clients' money. This is the benign interpretation. But investigators have not ruled out the possibility the deceptions began for a much simpler reason, to siphon off money from the Morgan Grenfell clients into private pockets.

This suspicion was the reason Morgan Grenfell and the Royal Bank of Scotland obtained an injunction to freeze Mr Young's personal assets on Wednesday.

But whatever the initial reason for setting up front companies last year, it is clear that in the later stages of the deception they have been used to hide large and growing losses and to deceive senior management at Morgan Grenfell and Imro.

There may have been several strands to this, and regulators are still unsure which way their inquiries will lead them.

Peter Rodgers

Tracking the tortuous trail of front companies

Luxembourg link

Peter Young, the fund manager at the centre of the Morgan Grenfell Asset Management scandal, first asked his brokers, Fiba Nordic Securities for advice on setting up Luxembourg-based front companies to hide his activities in the spring of 1995.

These companies were at the heart of the manoeuvres he used to deceive his employers and the City's regulators.

Fiba Nordic, itself owned by two Luxembourg registered firms, recommended two reputable Swiss lawyers, Marco Wolf and Juerg Wyler, who ran a partnership based in Zurich. It was their task to set up a series of holding companies, for at least five of which Mr Wyler and Mr Wyler acted as directors.

But the tentacles of this secretive miniature empire stretched across the Atlantic to the British Virgin Islands. Documents obtained by the Independent show that the companies' origins rest in a British Virgin Island company called Interam Services Limited, run by Ariane Slinger.

who was registered as a resident of Luxembourg, Interam Services is registered in Tortola in the British Virgin Islands.

Mr Wolf and Mr Wyler declined to comment yesterday from their offices in Zurich while Mr Slinger's telephone in Luxembourg had been disconnected.

Several months after the initial contact, in July and August last year, the first of the Luxembourg companies was established.

A typical example is Celtec Technology Holding SA, established on 26 July 1995. Mr Wolf and Mr Wyler are on the board of the company, registered as having capitalisation of 1.25 million Luxembourg francs. It was set up as a pure investment company. Other holding companies were Horton Technology, Waterpro Holding SA, and Catherineholm Holding.

Investigators believe Mr Young may have first started using these holding companies last year when warrants he held in

a company were maturing. This meant his stake in the company – thought to be Norwegian technology firm Sysdeo, would jump, probably busting the limits set on the funds ownership stake in the firm.

But, the holding companies were later used much more regularly, probably after April this year when Morgan Grenfell Asset Managers discovered his stakes in the unlisted companies had grown too large compared with the size of his portfolio.

Instructed to reduce the holdings, he instructed the string of holding companies to buy stakes in the unlisted companies at a discounted price.

This made it easier to make it seem as if he was reducing the size of his holding as the stake is measured in terms of value. He could then value the stakes in the holding companies, because they are unlisted and difficult for outsiders to value, at what ever price he chose.

The trail to the maze of the companies appears to have first started unravelling in March, when his broker Fiba Nordic

was linked in a magazine article as having been involved in a private placement for a Mexican firm called Solv-Ex.

Fiba Nordic alerted its regulator, the Securities and Futures Authority, to the alleged problem, and the SFA asked for a list of clients involved in the deal.

One was Russ & Oil Technology, one of the holding companies set up by Mr Young. It was also named on the injunction issued by Morgan Grenfell and the funds' trustees earlier this week to freeze his assets.

Mr Young believed in the small companies he invested and seemingly wanted them to survive. But the extent of his holdings continuing to become increasingly apparent.

He seems to have broken Securities and Investments Board (SIB) rules and internal guidelines at Morgan Grenfell, which is discovering it owns nearly half of Ashurst Technology, a Canadian technology firm, and under the rules of the Oslo stock exchange the asset management firm has found it owns 51 per cent.

Jill Treanor

Dobson brands Young devious and disobedient

The aftershock

Peter Young appears to have engaged in a systematic and complex attempt to disguise losses and cover up the fact that he was failing to comply with instructions from superiors to reduce his exposure to unquoted securities. Michael Dobson, chief executive of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, said yesterday.

Mr Dobson also refused to rule out the possibility that he benefited personally from his dealings. Morgan Grenfell has obtained an injunction freezing his assets. It was taken out in conjunction with Royal Bank of Scotland, trustee to the two funds he managed.

Commenting on the scandal, which left a £180m hole in Morgan Grenfell Asset Management, Mr Dobson denied that it reflected a general failure in management controls. But he confirmed that Deutsche Bank, Morgan Grenfell's parent company, would shift ultimate responsibility for the unit trusts business over to Frankfurt, where it will be put under the control of the bank's mutual funds division.

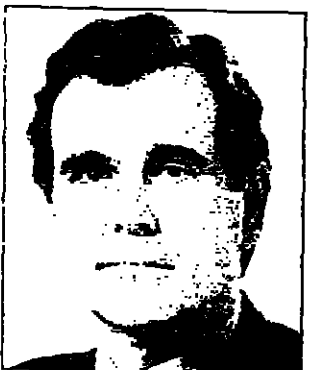
"Clearly what has happened is highly embarrassing and completely unacceptable. It's never happened before, we are not used to it, and it will never happen again," he said.

"However, the implication that it is symptomatic of a wider breakdown in internal controls is not right. This was a localised incident on the unit trust side. Deutsche has acted decisively and swiftly to ensure that investors are not disadvantaged."

"Mr Young plainly did wrong. He misled everyone and breached his position of trust. Why he was not controlled properly within existing structures we

are still trying to establish. How did he do it? How did he get away with it for so long? These are all questions we are trying to answer. Some highly complex structures were set up to disguise the fact that he had gone against the instructions of his superiors."

Mr Young had been ordered to sell down his positions to



Michael Dobson: "It will never happen again"

comply with rules on unquoted securities but did not. "He was devious, smart and clever," Mr Dobson said.

"The best interpretation that can be put on it is that he believed in his investments and thought he was acting in the best interests of investors by doing this, but even if this is the case he plainly acted in a way which is completely unacceptable."

It is understood that Mr Young has not been fired but remains on suspension so that Morgan Grenfell can ensure access to him and his co-operation in continuing investigations.

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996 High	1996 Low
FTSE 100	3983.00	+5.80	+0.1	3918.70	3632.30
FTSE 250	4403.20	-3.50	-0.1	4588.60	4015.30
FTSE 350	1947.10	+1.90	+0.1	1990.50	1815.60
FT Small Cap	2167.77	+0.77	+0.0	2244.36	1954.06
FT All Share	1984.98	+1.83	+0.1	1936.24	1791.95
New York	5654.68	+47.72	+0.9	5773.00	5032.94
Tokyo	20152.52	-227.29	-1.1	22686.80	19734.70
Hong Kong	11025.59	-14.92	-0.1	11984.99	10204.87
Frankfurt	2517.00	-12.54	-0.5	2583.49	2253.38

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling	UK medium gilt	US long bond	Money Market Rates	Bond Yields	Other
1 month	1 month	1 month	1 month	1 month	1 month
5.50	5.50	7.50	5.50	7.50	7.50
5.75	5.75	7.75	5.75	7.75	7.75
6.00	6.00	8.00	6.00	8.00	8.00
6.25	6.25	8.25	6.25	8.25	8.25
6.50	6.50	8.50	6.50	8.50	8.50
6.75	6.75	8.75	6.75	8.75	8.75
7.00	7.00	9.00	7.00	9.00	9.00
7.25	7.25	9.25	7.25	9.25	9.25
7.50	7.50	9.50	7.50	9.50	9.50
7.75	7.75	9.75	7.75	9.75	9.75
8.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	10.00
8.25	8.25	10.25	8.25	10.25	10.25
8.50	8.50	10.50	8.50	10.50	10.50
8.75	8.75	10.75	8.75	10.75	10.75
9.00	9.00	11.00	9.00	11.00	11.00
9.25	9.25	11.25	9.25	11.25	11.25
9.50	9.50	11.50	9.50	11.50	11.50
9.75	9.75	11.75	9.75	11.75	11.75
10.00	10.00	12.00	10.00	12.00	12.00

CURRENCIES					
£/\$	£/DM	£/¥	Pound	Dollar	Other
1.55	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.55
1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56
1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57
1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58
1.59	1.59	1.59	1.59	1.59	1.59
1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60
1.61	1.61	1.61	1.61	1.61	1.61
1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62
1.63	1.63	1.63	1.63	1.63	1.63
1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64
1.65	1.65	1.65	1.65	1.65	1.65
1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66
1.67	1.67	1.67	1.67	1.67	1.67
1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68
1.69	1.69	1.69	1.69	1.69	1.69
1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70
1.71	1.71	1.71	1.71	1.71	1.71
1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72
1.73	1.73	1.73	1.73	1.73	1.73
1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74
1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75

هكذا من ألابل

Morgan Grenfell affair brings out the humbug



JEREMY WARNER

"London will maintain its edge as a financial centre. Scandals of this sort plainly damage that reputation, but they do not destroy it"

It is hard to exaggerate the air of devastation and disbelief that hangs over the Finsbury Circus offices of Morgan Grenfell Asset Management. To most of the largely decent and highly competent souls who work there, this is not just a bad business, it is a totally incomprehensible one.

The failure in control which allowed it to happen is just a part of it. Almost worse is the realisation that someone as apparently volatile, untrustworthy and, it now seems, just plain dishonest as Peter Young could not only have established himself within their midst, but flourished and prospered there.

Fund management is first and foremost about integrity and diligence; nothing excuses MGAM's failings but in a way they are explained by the fact that such qualities are accepted as given among those in charge of other people's money. No one would expect an apparently reliable fund manager to behave like this. The controls are not there to be exercised; they are insurance. So are the trustees, whose failings appear to have been equally lamentable.

Mr Young was a seemingly able, very plausible, and for a time at least, highly successful young fund manager. How he came to go so seriously off the rails is perhaps a question that only the shrinks can answer fully. Part of it, however, is undoubtedly our old friend hubris.

Mr Young had one of the top-performing funds of 1995; plainly he believed in his investment judgements and the array of unquoted securities he had begun to accumulate. When it became apparent that he was breaching his limits, rather than doing what he was told and unwinding the positions he systematically set about disguising what was going on. Whether he also had his fingers in the till has yet to be established.

The fact that Morgan Grenfell has moved to freeze his assets tells you that it is at least suspected.

For Michael Dobson, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell's chief executive, to describe this sorry affair as "an isolated incident" is from his point of view, with a damage limitation exercise to confront, wholly understandable. But it is also clearly nonsense. If it can happen in one part of Morgan Grenfell Asset Management, then it could also happen elsewhere. Nor should we automatically accept the line that Morgan Grenfell was the hapless victim of a clever and devious manipulator. That also is just too convenient an explanation. I'm not suggesting here any question of collusion or conspiracy, that Morgan Grenfell's top brass are making Mr Young into a scapegoat for something they all knew about. That would be daft. But plainly there has been negligence, the scale of which has yet to be established.

There are very parallels here with Morgan Grenfell's last big scandal, the Guinness affair. Let it be forgotten, the shenanigans surrounding the Guinness bid for Distillers were little more than 10 years ago, and though the mischief occurred on the corporate finance side of Morgan Grenfell, the story isn't so very different - a star employee given all the leeway he needed to run riot. Mr Dobson will have to hope that the fall-out from Mr Young's antics is not quite as devastating. With the Guinness affair the buck didn't stop with Roger Seelig, Morgan Grenfell's head of corporate finance, its finance director, and yes its chief executive too, followed in short order. Certainly Morgan Grenfell's German masters at Deutsche Bank are going to want to exercise much greater hands-on control over their British investment bank than they have to date.

The regulators too would be wise to hold their counsel. Now champing at the bit to discipline everyone in sight, they should first be looking to their own houses. That there was a breakdown of internal controls at Morgan Grenfell, we know; but could this not also be a case of regulatory failure, ignored warnings and the like?

Despite all this, it is easy to overblow the significance of Mr Young's costly little jolly. Though it obviously took a lot longer than it should have done, Mr Young was even-

tually unmasked. Morgan Grenfell's parent bank, Deutsche, then moved decisively and swiftly to ensure investors were not disadvantaged. Thank God for the Germans is all I can say. The question of compensation is clearly not over yet, but without Deutsche's capital, Morgan Grenfell could have been wiped out. And although the affair has prompted the usual questions, soul-searching and wringing of hands over the City's position as a financial centre, I can't see it myself. As long as the City remains the lowest cost, most efficient and most convenient place for those in financial markets to do business, London will maintain its edge as a financial centre. Scandals of this sort plainly damage that reputation, but they do not destroy it.

The City is in any case progressively becoming a foreign controlled place, in investment banking at least. It's not just the capital - increasingly it is the management systems, the technology and even the top personnel who are not originally of the land. The effect of scandals like this, and Barings before it, is to hasten that trend. They do not spell the end of the City, but they are symptomatic of the decline of a quintessentially British culture of merchant banking.

Which brings me neatly onto a related aspect of this affair. Of all the "why,

oh why" pieces written on the Morgan Grenfell debacle this week, surely the richest was penned by William Rees-Mogg in the *Times*. Things aren't what they used to be, he moaned. Not like in my day when everyone abided by the principles of sound investment (whatever they may be). Everything is too fast these days, there's no integrity, everyone's in it for a fast buck... blah, blah, yawn. But hold on a moment. What's this? "The responsibility comes back to the directors of the investment companies concerned. They tend to be too remote..." Can this really be the same Lord Rees-Mogg who as head of GEC's remuneration committee was so "remote" from the views of his shareholders that he allowed himself to be bulldozed into agreeing a £10m pay package for the company's new chief executive. Is this really the same Lord Rees-Mogg who managed "remotely" to agree a set of performance criteria so challenging that it only required the new man to get out of bed in the morning to hit the jackpot. Or possibly it is that Rees-Mogg who according to the gossip is so "remote" that he didn't actually negotiate the package at all, but merely rubber-stamped something already agreed by others.

Yes, indeed, Lord Rees-Mogg writes from experience when he talks about directors being too remote.

Weinstock departs with an attack on Greenbury reforms

PATRICK TOOHER

Lord Weinstock yesterday delivered a typically single-minded attack on the latest trends in corporate governance as he handed over the reins of GEC, the defence and electronics giant, to former Lucas chief executive George Simpson after 33 years at the helm.

In his farewell speech to shareholders at the company's annual meeting, Lord Weinstock rounded on aspects of the Greenbury and Cadbury committees set up to curb excesses in company boardrooms. "[They] are not engraved in stone and brought down from Mount Sinai," he said.

"I don't like non-executives being set against executives as Cadbury seems to imply. It destroys the cohesion of the board. They should be supported by non-executives, not held in suspicion by them."

"One or two of the Greenbury provisions are a bit peculiar," he continued. "They are used as an excuse to virtually persecute directors."

"Trust must exist in a democratic capitalist society between shareholders and the people who run their company. The last

few years have seen examples of greed and exploitation of shareholders... but we have been more frugal than any company."

Lord Weinstock was speaking after shareholders heard Lord Prior apologise to Mr Simpson for causing him "acute embarrassment" over the way GEC dealt with his controversial pay and options package potentially worth up to £1.5m a year.

"I don't think we have handled this matter very well and I regret it very much," Lord Prior said.

Mr Simpson's appointment to the board was overwhelmingly approved by shareholders. Details of his original remuneration threatened to spark a revolt among institutional investors who claimed the performance threshold needed to trigger share option and incentive awards were too low.

But earlier this week, GEC amended the terms and conditions, which are now based on top quartile share performance as measured against the FTSE 100 index.

Mr Simpson will receive an annual salary of £600,000 plus annual pension contributions of £300,000 and a one-off £500,000 payment in compensation for

what he would have received at Lucas had he stayed with the company.

His initial three-year contract is allowed under the Greenbury code, but this will revert to a one-year contract to comply with current codes of best practice.

Lord Prior paid tribute to Lord Weinstock, saying that he had become a "legendary figure" in British industry during his time at GEC.

"No other industrialist in the whole of the post-war period has made a comparable contribution to the survival and success of British industry," Lord Prior said.

Clearly moved, Lord Weinstock sat with his head in his hands as Lord Prior also paid tribute to Lord Weinstock's son, Simon, who died of cancer earlier this year.

Lord Weinstock received a standing ovation after his speech in which he made clear that he saw Mr Simpson as a force for continuity and not change.

Leadership of GEC, he said, took "teams of people who trust each other and can work together - putting ego behind them".



Calling it a day: Lord Weinstock going through the back door to the GEC annual meeting where he attacked trends in corporate governance Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

IN BRIEF

UK interest rates bottom out

Strong UK July industrial production data suggests interest rates may have bottomed at 5.75 per cent, although the pick-up in demand remains tentative and firms are still grappling with a stocks overhang. "I think we should see it as a bounce-back from a weak June rather than necessarily the start of a better trend," said John Sheppard, chief economist at Yamaichi International Europe. Industrial production was up 0.5 per cent in July and 0.9 per cent year-on-year, while manufacturing output rose 0.5 per cent in the month and 0.3 per cent year-on-year. Market expectations were 0.5 per cent in July and 0.8 per cent year-on-year for industrial production, and 0.3 and 0.1 per cent for manufacturing output.

Mills moves from coaches to trains

Adam Mills (left), a former top executive with the National Express coach group, was yesterday appointed chief executive of London and Continental Railways, the consortium selected to take over Eurostar train services and build the new high-speed Channel tunnel rail link. Mr Mills, who has been on secondment to LCR from National Express since June, forecast that the rail operator would increase its share of the cross-Channel market significantly next year. In the year to August passenger numbers increased from 3.9 million to 6.4 million. National Express is one of eight shareholders in LCR with a 17 per cent stake. The other principal shareholders are SBC Warburg and Bechtel with 18 per cent each and Virgin with 17 per cent.

Weak quarter affects Laird shares

Laird Group, the automotive and building components group, saw its shares slide 36p to 450.5p yesterday after unveiling an 11 per cent fall in half-time profits to £33.4m. Ian Arnott, chief executive, blamed the downturn on a weak first quarter after a very strong period in the first half of the previous year. He said the main pressure was on volumes and margins in the French automotive business. The outlook was difficult to interpret because of holidays in July and August, but the US was "OK", and building products should see a seasonal upturn in the second half. Cego, the handles and locks business acquired from Norcor for £40m last year, was bedding in and contributed £1.3m to these figures. Laird said more workers may be taken on at its Fullarton computer components business, where an increase in output is planned over the next six months to meet demand from Compaq.

UBS predicts large house price rise

House prices are set to rise 7 per cent by the end of this year and 10 per cent in 1998, according to a new report yesterday from UBS, the Swiss banking group. The UBS survey, generally regarded as one of the most authoritative, is among the highest predictions for price movements issued to date. Rob Thomas, analyst at UBS, said the recovery seen so far this year and continuing demand for housing meant that previous property price estimates needed to be revised upwards.

US unemployment lowest in years

The US employment report for August showed the American economy continued to grow at a strong pace, but the pace may not be strong enough to cause the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates, according to analysts. The unemployment rate dropped to the lowest level in seven years, hourly earnings were up by 0.5 per cent and the work week was up by 0.8 per cent, all warning indicators that labor shortages were near and inflation would begin to accelerate, analysts said. The average monthly payroll figure of 250,000 was about in line with market forecasts.

Record profits for Schroders

Schroders, one of the last remaining independent British merchant banks, delivered record half-year profits, but warned that conditions could become more uncertain. The bank, chaired by Win Bischoff (right), said that although the second half had started reasonably well, "it will not be easy to match two successive record half years". Pre-tax profits soared from £35.6m to £116m in the first half of the year. The bank blamed elections in both the UK and US for its caution, but it is still raising its interim dividend by a third to 6p, at the top end of forecasts. The investment banking arm saw profits rise to £50.7m from £41.7m and Schroders said it had gained several prominent new clients.



Mowlem may float products unit

John Mowlem, the building to management services group, said it was considering the partial flotation of its access products and services unit in 1997. The company posted pre-tax profits of £5.3m for the first half, compared with a loss of £32.0m a year ago.

Rolls-Royce scoops \$1.5bn orders

Rolls-Royce won aero-engine orders worth more than \$1.5bn at this week's Farnborough Airshow, reflecting the upturn in the aviation industry, the company said yesterday. Chairman Sir Ralph Robins added that business inquiries were 30 per cent higher than at the last show in 1994. Rolls also launched the latest version of its Trent engine, the Trent 900, which will be able to power both the new stretched version of the Boeing 747 and Airbus Industries' proposed 1,000-seat double-decker aircraft, the A3XX.

Airtours' Collinson on the move

Airtours said Hugh Collinson was relinquishing his responsibilities as the group's managing director to take on the position as chairman of the newly established accommodation division.

Merger creates biggest home care group

MAGNUS GRIMOND

The consolidation of the nursing home industry took a big step forward yesterday after Takare and Court Cavendish, two of the biggest players, unveiled a £254m agreed merger which would create the UK's biggest care home group. With nearly 12,000 beds, the new business, to be called TC Group, will be double the size of Westminster Health Care,

shares for every 100 in Court Cavendish, valuing the latter at just over 236p each, with Takare up 2p to 150.5p yesterday.

Keith Bradshaw, Takare's chairman, who will take on the same role in the enlarged group, said the merger grew out of Takare's strategic review of the business started six months ago. They quickly realised that Court Cavendish was pursuing exactly the strategy they were looking for and when talks began five weeks ago "in less than half an hour we had more or less plotted the way forward".

"We have got the design and they have the production skills," claimed Chai Patel, chairman of Court Cavendish, who is to become TC chief executive. The merger is expected to be earnings enhancing from next year, raising occupancy of homes, fee rates and margins.

Adding on services traditionally supplied by local authorities and district nurses, such as meals on wheels and home care, where Court Cavendish has long experience, would be easier for Takare's modular nursing homes, Mr Bradshaw suggested.

Paul Saper of Laing & Buisson, a health care consultancy, said Court Cavendish would be in the driving seat and success would depend on how quickly they could deliver new products into the homes.

The merger is being seen as complementary both in terms of geography and market position. Takare's 8,550 beds in 63 homes are mostly based in the north and east of England, while Court Cavendish has 3,192 in 63 homes, predominantly in the southern part of the country and is well represented within the M25.

Canal Plus merger topples BSkyB

JOHN WILLCOCK

BSkyB is about to be toppled from its position as Europe's largest pay-television company by a ground-breaking merger between Richemont's NetHOLD subsidiary and the French television company, Canal Plus.

Canal Plus is to acquire 100 per cent of NetHOLD, which is based in the Netherlands, from NetHOLD's two parent companies, Richemont of Switzerland and South Africa's Multichoice, in exchange for 6.1 million new Canal Plus shares and a cash payment of \$45m.

The deal announced last night will create a combined television group with over 8.5 million subscribers. It is only the latest development in a shake-out of the fast-developing pay-

television sector. Media rivals are jockeying for position with revolutionary digital technology coming on stream, allowing a huge expansion in the number of channels available.

Richemont already dominates its home market of Switzerland, and sees the Canal Plus alliance as a route into the lucrative German market. NetHOLD dominates the Scandinavian pay-television market and Canal Plus the French sector. It also has ambitions in the Low Countries.

In the key market of Germany, Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB has already formed a powerful alliance in digital pay-television with the German media tycoon Leo Kirch.

Rene Weber, an analyst with Bank Vontobel, said yesterday:

"Murdoch's BSkyB is number one in Europe while NetHOLD is number two and Canal Plus is number three, so it would make sense for NetHOLD and Canal Plus to join forces."

Canal Plus and Richemont said last night that the new combine would have "a significant position in France, Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, Benelux and Germany as well as an established presence in several growing markets in Central Europe".

The group added that its aim "is to offer a wide range of tailor-made channels adapted to local tastes across Europe". Under the terms of the deal, Richemont and Multichoice will own 15 and 5 per cent of the new group respectively.

Two shareholders in Richemont, Compagnie Gen-

erale des Eaux and Havas, will each have three seats on the new Canal Plus board, as will Richemont/Multichoice.

Canal Plus said: "As NetHOLD's operations are currently in a significant growth phase, particularly in view of the roll-out of digital broadcasting, NetHOLD is expected to incur operating losses until 1998 and reach break-even in operating terms during 1999."

"Significant profits and cash generation are expected from the year 2,000 onwards."

Johann Rupert, chief executive officer of Richemont and chairman of NetHOLD said: "Over the past four years NetHOLD expanded rapidly across Europe. I welcome this merger as an opportunity to increase our involvement."

Regulators give OK to Olivetti results

ANNE HANLEY

in Rome

Olivetti, the troubled computer giant, last night said that Italian stock market regulators had approved its half-year results after suspending shares in the group following allegations by a former top executive that its losses had been understated.

The shares will now resume trading on Monday. After meeting with the Milan bourse watchdog Consob, Olivetti said that its accounts, showing a first-half loss of 440bn lire, had met "legal norms and general accounting principles".

On Wednesday night Olivetti's chief operating officer, Renzo Francesconi, dramatically resigned, alleging that the true extent of the company's losses had been disguised.

This prompted panic in the markets and a sharp fall in the shares of the former Olivetti

chairman Carlo De Benedetti's two holding companies, Cofide, and CIR. Mr De Benedetti resigned on Tuesday night.

Olivetti shares were suspended at 749 lire compared with the 1,000 lire paid by investors, including a key group of London fund managers at the time of Olivetti's £915m rescue rights issue last December.

Shares in Cofide continued to tumble yesterday, registering a 7 per cent fall in two days, while CIR slid 8 per cent.

Despite the apparent reprieve for Olivetti, it is under intense pressure from shareholders to bring an end to losses that have now reached 4.34 trillion lire since 1990.

Safeway and BP to open petrol shops

NIGEL COPE

Safeway and BP have joined forces to open 100 new convenience stores featuring petrol forecourts. The companies will invest a total of £100m in the sites, which will be selected from the network of 2,900 petrol stations created by the merger of BP and Mobil's European retail businesses.

The stores will be jointly branded under the BP and Safeway names. They will feature a petrol station, a shop with around 2,000 product lines, car parking, cash dispensers and car-wash facilities. Safeway said other services such as dry cleaning could be added.

The first site will open next month in Basildon, Essex. Further sites are planned for early next year. Safeway said the stores would be slightly larger than many convenience stores and would target customers

who required more than just a "top-up" shop.

"For us, it's a way of seeking leadership in the growing convenience store market," said Safeway's Steve Webb. "By going in with BP we think we can achieve that faster than anyone else."

With the Government clamping down on the development of out-of-town supermarkets, all the large supermarket groups are looking for different ways to add to their floorspace. Most are expanding stores while others are establishing smaller high street formats.

The supermarket sector is facing a renewed price war from Monday when Tesco cuts the price of 600 product lines. Sainsbury's has pledged to match the prices while rivals such as Asda are expected to launch other campaigns.

Safeway shares closed 0.5p higher at 330p.

sport

Davies proves to the Manor born

Golf
ANDY FARRELL
reports from Hanbury Manor

So Laura Davies got over the jet lag. Having scouted the course on her first round, Davies had her yardages worked out for yesterday's second round of the Marks & Spencer European Open. She promptly drove the green at the 310-yard dog-leg-left first for an opening birdie.

Davies, just returned from a

birdie-fest in America, had some way to catch up to the Australian Corinne Dibnah, after a 70, was already six shots ahead at eight under.

The next best is Stephanie Dallongeville at seven under, three ahead of a group that includes Trish Johnson, whose 66 was overtaken as the best of the day. It was the third time Davies has tied the European tour

record low round of 63, and the world No 1 has only once returned one stroke lower in America.

The 5,954-yard Hanbury Manor course had no answer to Davies' 300-yard-plus drives. Apart from a seven-iron hit within two feet at the short 11th, none of the birdies required more than a wedge or sand iron approach shot. Three times she misread 15-foot eagle putts, and though she chipped in at the 16th, another chip lipped out at the ninth. "I played all right today," she joked.

"I have never had a low round without coming off saying it could have been better. It is always difficult when you tee off a long way behind someone, but the best way to shoot a low round is with a big finish."

"There is a lot of golf left to be played but I'm pleased with the way I'm hitting the ball. It's always good when I can hit the driver a lot and feel some consistency."

Kristel Mourgue d'Algue almost holed in one at the par-three fourth, only to find her caddy had selected the identical Callaway seven-iron from the bag of Maria Hjorth. All the players in the group were playing the same make of club and the French rookie was penalised two shots under rule 4-4a. M&S's usual return-and-replace option was not available.

"I sacked the caddy immediately," said Mourgue d'Algue, who took a double bogey five. "It was the first time I had not selected the club myself and it has cost me dearly. This guy said he was a professional caddy but yesterday he was always about 50 yards behind and moving at the wrong time. I was too kind and kept him on for today. He asked if I was still going to pay him and I told him no, just go away."

Scores, Digest, page 27

Torrance heading in Ryder Cup direction

Sam Torrance, always at his best when Ryder Cup points are at stake, was true to form in the second round of the European Masters at Crans-sur-Sierre, Switzerland, yesterday.

On this mountain course, 5,000ft up in the Swiss Alps, Torrance shot an eight-under-par 63 for a two-round aggregate of 128 to lead the field by six shots. There are still two rounds to go but Torrance looks certain to collect a big cheque which would ease an immediate worry and give him a lift towards a ninth-successive Ryder Cup appearance.

Torrance, who leads the Midlander Paul Broadhurst by six shots and Lee Westwood and Sweden's Olle Nordberg by seven, is 66th in the Order of Merit. He needs at least another £25,000 to move up into the top 50 who qualify for the Volvo Masters, the last European Tour event, in Valderrama next month.

The first prize here is £127,950 and with one Ryder Cup point given for each round won it would enable the 43-year-old Scot to go top of the points table if he were to win.

He returned home from a Caribbean holiday two weeks ago sporting a crew cut and beard, and failed to make the cut at the British Masters, the first Ryder Cup points tournament at Collingtree Park, last week.

"I just didn't hit the ball well and my dad (Bob Torrance) gave me a five-hour workout at Wentworth on Monday. He made me move my legs and body together more, and it worked," Torrance said. "I shot 65 yesterday and 63 today and I can honestly say that these two rounds were better than any I played last year when I finished second to Monty (Colin Montgomerie) in the Order of Merit."

"Today I also went back to my normal putter. I used a heavier one yesterday and didn't feel really comfortable. So I went back to my old faithful and I had only 27 putts today."

His fellow Scot Montgomerie is eight shots behind Torrance after shooting a level-par round over the 71. Montgomerie had seven birdies, two double bogeys and three bogeys. "It was ridiculous. I had eight birdies in my first round and seven today and I'm only six under par," he said.



On course for a record: Laura Davies drives at the fifth

Photograph: Peter Jay

Squelch the quiet achiever

Equestrianism
GENEVIEVE MURPHY
from Burghley

Bruce Davidson, of the United States, held a joint lead with Britain's Mary King when the dressage phase of the Burghley Horse Trials was completed yesterday. King had been the overnight leader on Star Appeal and Davidson, who rode Squelch, equalled her excellent score.

Davidson, who won an Olympic team silver medal in Atlanta, was due to ride two horses over the cross-country course today. Yesterday, however, he withdrew Eagle Lion (his winning mount at Badminton last year) because the horse is sore in his left hindquarters.

Captain Phillips is trainer of the Olympic team as well as the course designer at Burghley, where the big drop at the Last Pit Log (fence three) is causing some consternation. "I wish he had to ride the third fence and show us how to do it," Davidson said, with a smile.

The schedule for nine-year-old Squelch has twice been interrupted through injury. In March 1995 he missed the Pan-American Games when he "tweaked a tendon." This year he was due to run at Badminton until Davidson broke his own shoulder and was forced to withdraw. The rider continues to regard Squelch as "a very exciting horse."

Pippa Funnell is now lying third on Bits and Pieces, followed by the Frenchman Didier Seguret on Coeur de Rooker and William Fox-Pitt on Loch Alan. Terry Boon, who was eliminated here in the dressage last year with Vital Decision, had a few problems with the talented horse yesterday but is nevertheless lying in sixth place.

In the absence of Eagle Lion, Mark Todd will be the first to tackle the cross-country this morning on Kingarrie. Todd's second mount, this year's Badminton winner, Bertie Bunt, was a little "ring rusty" in yesterday's dressage and he is now lying ninth.

Results, Digest, page 27

Cunningham's return

Basketball
RICHARD TAYLOR

Alan Cunningham, the 40-something veteran who announced his retirement at the end of last season, is back at Wembley Arena tonight pitching for a spot in a London Towers line-up decimated since winning the Budweiser League title four months ago.

Cunningham returns to his favourite court playing against FC Porto in the Sainsbury's Classic semi-finals. The Greek club Peristeri play Athletes In Action in the other semi-final, with the play-offs tomorrow.

Cunningham, who previously played for London coach Kevin Cadle at Kingston, Guildford and Glasgow, won every

domestic honour in a 14-year career and was tempted during the summer by a final big pay day with the Greek club Iraklio after leaving Worthing Bears.

But illness in his family brought Cunningham back and Cadle says: "Alan has the experience of playing in Europe and in England and I just hope he can hit the mark for us, because we need help quickly."

London played the first of 10 European Cup games next Wednesday, against Verona in Italy, and their plans have been further ruptured by the league's controversial ruling to permit five foreigners per team this season. English basketball is now completely out of step with the rest of the Continent and London will be allowed to use only two foreigners in cup games.

Glamorgan denied by captain Smith

ROUND-UP

Robin Smith, the acting Hampshire captain, batted almost four hours for 91 and his side's ninth-wicket pair stood at ten wickets Glamorgan victory at Southampton yesterday.

After Matthew Maynard declared overnight to leave Hampshire all day to get 331 in what proved to be 39 overs. Glamorgan reduced the home side to 36 for 3 before Smith stopped the rot with a stand of 150 for the fourth wicket with Will Kendall.

They were quickly out after tea and two more wickets fell cheaply but Hampshire's half-wicket pair of Matthew Keogh, held back to No 10 in the order by a hand injury, and Raj Maru survived 15 overs.

The Australian vice-captain Steve Waugh was reprimanded and given a suspended fine of 30 per cent of his match fee for three months for challenging a ruling by umpire B C Cooney on wides in a Singer World Series match in Colombo yesterday.

Waugh, named man-of-the-match after Australia beat India by three wickets to qualify for today's final against hosts Sri Lanka, was punished for "disrespect and bringing the game into disrepute" by the match referee, John Reid.

Rugby League
30 unless stated
STONES PREMIERSHIP Final: St Helens v Wigan (7.30 pm) at Old Trafford. Divisive Premiership final. Wigan's victory (4.30 pm) at Old Trafford.

Rugby Union
30 unless stated
REPRESENTATIVE MATCH: Ireland v Wales (at Thomond Park, Limerick).
CONFERENCE LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP: Leinster v Cardiff (8.00 pm) at Thomond Park. Leinster's victory (4.30 pm) at Thomond Park.

Basketball
MEPS NATIONAL TROPHY Final: Northants v London (8.00 pm) at London. Northants' victory (4.30 pm) at London.

Ice hockey
BENSON AND HEDGES CUP: Newcastle v Sheffield (8.00 pm) at Sheffield. Newcastle's victory (4.30 pm) at Sheffield.

Speedway
PREMIER LEAGUE: Bradford v Reading (7.30 pm) at Reading. Reading's victory (4.30 pm) at Reading.

Other sports
EQUINE TRIATHLON: Burghley Horse Trials (9.00 am) at Burghley. Results, Digest, page 27.

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LONGCHAMP - tomorrow

2.25 EMIRATES PRIX DU MOULIN DE LONGCHAMP (Group 1) 1m

1-7-13352	VETERUS (A) 4.52	1-7-13352	VETERUS (A) 4.52
2-90-2851	CHURCHILL (A) 4.52	2-90-2851	CHURCHILL (A) 4.52
3-08-7013	SHAMAL (A) 4.52	3-08-7013	SHAMAL (A) 4.52
4-11-112	ALAN (A) 4.52	4-11-112	ALAN (A) 4.52
5-14-148	LE TITON (A) 4.52	5-14-148	LE TITON (A) 4.52
6-21-115	GREY (A) 4.52	6-21-115	GREY (A) 4.52
7-1-32181	SPRINGWATER (A) 4.52	7-1-32181	SPRINGWATER (A) 4.52
8-14-298	MEADOWS (A) 4.52	8-14-298	MEADOWS (A) 4.52
9-81-121	SHAKE THE YOUNG (A) 4.52	9-81-121	SHAKE THE YOUNG (A) 4.52

GETTING FORECAST: 4-4 Springwater & Meadows (jointly), 4-4 Alkan, 4-4 Shake the Young, 4-4 Meadows (jointly), 4-4 Meadows, 4-4 Meadows, 4-4 Meadows.

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THE CURRAGH - tomorrow

4.15 MOYGLARE STUDD STAKES (Group 1) 270 fms 7.11

1-11-112	ALAN (A) 4.52	1-11-112	ALAN (A) 4.52
2-90-2851	CHURCHILL (A) 4.52	2-90-2851	CHURCHILL (A) 4.52
3-08-7013	SHAMAL (A) 4.52	3-08-7013	SHAMAL (A) 4.52
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NATWEST TROPHY FINAL: Essex v Lancashire at Lord's today

Gooch's articulate deeds from the heart

Derek Pringle recounts an Essex legend's methods of leadership and play that have stood the test of father time

He will be there earlier than most this morning, just to run an eye over the old place before the rival hordes arrive and to ensure his bat and feet are moving as he wants them. Once satisfied, he will join his team-mates for fielding practice before returning to his usual changing place by the far window of the Visitors' dressing-room, where, with a cup of tea for company, he will quietly visualise the day ahead.

The Essex Man may have disappeared, but Graham Gooch is as ambitious as he ever was, leaving little to chance, particularly where his beloved Essex are concerned. His meticulous preparation is legendary and remains uncompromised despite the "will he or won't he" rumours that persist over his impending retirement.

At 43, he is not as spry as he once was, but with appetite for runs and batsmanship undimmed he will see today's NatWest final as another opportunity to add to a cabinet already bulging with cricket trophies. If there is a tear it will be blinked away, his emotions held well in check by an impassive moustache that still looks as if it had been created by a giant bat crash-landed into Mount Rushmore. No sopping Dickie Bird hanky needed here should the full house see fit to give him a standing ovation.

Lord's has always been a special place for Gooch. Ever since Essex won their first trophy there – the 1979 B&H final, a match Gooch dominated with a brilliant 120 – it has seen fit to provide the milestones of a lengthy career. It is a career that has seen him cast first as villain, for his part in the 1982 "rebel" tour to South Africa, and then as national treasure as the nation took his honesty to heart.

He also scored his first Test century there in 1980 against Holding, Croft, Garner and Roberts, when they cowed the Test playing world with their remorseless pace. It was an innings capped only by his monolithic 333 against India a decade later, the highest score at cricket's esteemed HQ. With 2,015 of his 8,900 Test runs scored under father time's impartial gaze, Gooch, more than most, deserves one last favour.

Not that he would want it. Gooch is a man driven to greatness by minimising the chance element in his game. Ever since the Aussies started playing us for mugs, he has been a man of pride and mission, adopting Allan Border's epithet: "If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail."



Graham Gooch: Cast as villain, for his part in the 1982 "rebel" tour, then as national treasure as the nation took his honesty to heart Photograph: Peter Jay

Taken at its most literal, it turned Gooch into an avuncular cyclops who, in his tireless quest to be the best, has sometimes failed to see the rest. It is a failing he now admits, and one he will have to keep in remission if coaching is to be the next vocation he turns his rational mind and method towards. He is certainly no ogre, as those with cosy outlook and blunt axes have sometimes claimed. Even when angry, he barely raises so much as a squeak, preferring to fix those who have displeased with a blue-eyed stare.

There is no bat throwing or hissing of shibboleths in the dressing-room either, the

steam outlet preferred by many after a poor decision. Simply a deep sigh, followed by the calm, orderly removal and replacement of equipment back into his cricket case. He is nearer than Bill Frindall's scorebook and 10 times more interesting, as those he has allowed to get to know him will attest.

He has had his trials on and off the field, and there was plenty of sighing in 1989 when Terry Alderman's outswinging kept exposing his flawed habit of planting, then playing around, his front pad. Catharsis was needed and it came in the unexpected form of the England captaincy, which he was

given after David Gower's sacking and the defection of half the England team to South Africa.

A rebel who had been seduced by the illicit *kruggerand* himself in 1982 – for which he received a three-year ban – Gooch was saddled with an inexperienced team who were given no hope of drawing a single Test against a mighty West Indies team, at their apogee as a world cricketing power. In fact England almost drew the series, winning the first Test in Jamaica, and being cruelly denied in the third, after rain and the cynical go-slow tactics of their opponents thwarted them.

Bolstered by this near-miss against the best team in the world, the Gooch blueprint of working hard and practising towards a plan became the norm. A punishing routine, it took little heed of individual needs as effort superceded ability in a well-intentioned bid to bring England success.

It also coincided with the rationalisation of Gooch's own game as a new mental rigour was ushered in to quell the flamboyant strokeplay of his earlier years – a change, which although compromising the "thrill factor", elevated his Test average from an in-different 37 to a respectable 42.58.

He is a man of pride and mission, adopting Allan Border's epithet: 'If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail'

Not unnaturally considering the improvement in his own game, Gooch expected those under him to adopt his vision. His distrust of those forever looking for short-cuts saw him form a close alliance with Mickey Stewart, who shared his puritanical work ethic. It was an ethic which brought him into conflict with David Gower, whose looser philosophy did not embrace the zeal of the newly converted.

In truth, Gower infuriated Gooch, who felt the left-hander's insouciance not only undermined his authority but his own sublime talent as well – a situation that was never amicably resolved and which Gooch considers to be one of the abiding failures of his career.

Since relinquishing the captaincy of county and country, Gooch has settled into something resembling a relaxed dotage. He is revered, but not idolised, being too human for that despite the constant doses of Van Morrison he feeds his ears. Occasionally known as "Pop", the paternal respect vanishes the instant he applies the spray and brush routine needed to present his impressive tansure before every fielding session.

Always an intensely private man, he now apparently dispenses advice and wisdom freely about the Essex dressing-room. That is a far cry from shy teenager who first sat there 25 years earlier and was asked by Keith Fletcher whether or not "it" spoke.

As it happens, "it" does, even if the more potent statements have been made by the three-odd pounds of timber swinging cleanly from that stand-and-deliver stance of his. It is a language both he and his supporters will miss. Few players in history have been able to claim the current Gooch double of most runs for club and country, and it is doubtful that any other county will ever get the unconditional commitment Gooch has given Essex.

And still it continues, with his 127th first-class century, scored against Warwickshire two days ago, moving Gooch into the all-time top 10, just above the hirsute WG Grace. It would, for many, be a fitting time to bow out. For Gooch, though, there is the pressing matter of today's NatWest final, as well as this season's Championship to consider. As long as there is petrol in the tank, and more glory for Essex, the future can hang.

Whitaker raises Leicester spirits

HENRY BLOFIELD

reports from Trent Bridge Nottinghamshire 324 & 196 Leicestershire 439 & 82-4 Leicester win by six wickets

Although there was a reassuring thoroughness about Leicestershire's victory here, they made heavier work than they should have done in scoring the 82 they needed for the victory that took them to the top of the Championship table. Not for the first time this year it was James Whitaker's cool head that steadied things.

Leicestershire, like Derbyshire, are trying to win what would be only their second Championship title, their first being in 1975 under Ray Illingworth. It has been an outstanding achievement for a side which may have lacked star quality but in which every member has played his part.

Indicative of this is the fact that, even with Alan Mullally playing for England, they have used only 13 players in the competition this year. Great credit must go to Whitaker, their new captain, who has thrived on the responsibility, although one must spare a thought for his long-serving and selfless predecessor, Nigel Briars, who was so cruelly pre-

vented by injury from playing a final season under Whitaker. It did not take David Millns long at the start to take the two remaining Nottinghamshire wickets. Chris Tolley was bow pushing half forward and Mark Bowden was bowled trying to play him to leg. Millns finished with the excellent figures of five for 31 from 18.1 overs.

On this still good pitch, such a small target should not have caused Leicestershire any problems. Yet they batted as if they had only to go through the motions to wrap it up, and most of them seemed to have only half a mind on the job. In the third over Darren Maddy drove at Bowen who held a return catch near his right ear.

Soon afterwards, Ben Smith drove at a wide one from Bowen without any footwork and was caught at second slip. Third to go was Vince Wells, bow pushing at Bowen, and after a fierce sweep earlier in the over, Phil Simmons tried to work Richard Bates to leg and was leg before.

But Whitaker, who bats these days with an authoritative composure, used his feet to drive Bates over mid-on and in conversations between overs he ensured that Greg McMillan did nothing silly. Together they saw Leicestershire home 10 minutes before lunch.

Cork burst not enough for Derbyshire

DEREK HODGSON

reports from Taunton Derbyshire 524 and 322-6 dec Somerset 484 and 296-8 Match drawn

Dominic Cork, unabashed by seeing his picture on the front of a tabloid, took three wickets for 19 runs in 28 balls, including Shane Lee, to give Derbyshire a whiff of what might have been a famous victory. On a golden afternoon made tense by news of rivals' victories, they had set Somerset to score 383 in 78 overs and finished tantalisingly short of bowling them out.

The rate set Somerset was a fraction under five an over, and at lunch, after 12 overs, they had reached 59 for the loss of Marcus Trescothick, who must have misjudged the line. The loss of Mark Lathwell, reaching, to a slip catch soon afterwards

Given Cork's impetus, they pounded away into the evening and on any pitch that offered a modicum of help to the bowlers on the fourth day, they must have won. It was their bad luck to meet, in this vital fixture, a Somerset team led by Peter Bowler, who departed the Racecourse in some acrimony two years ago, and a playing staff nine of whom are awaiting contract offers.

The rate set Somerset was a fraction under five an over, and at lunch, after 12 overs, they had reached 59 for the loss of Marcus Trescothick, who must have misjudged the line. The loss of Mark Lathwell, reaching, to a slip catch soon afterwards

brought the arrival not of Lee but of Richard Harden, hinting that Bowler was not seeking death or glory.

After reaching 100 in 21 overs, the rate dropped to three in 10, the momentum then being broken by Cork's spell. Bowler had to be pried out by a superb leg-side stumping by Karl Kricken, which left Rob Turner and Jason Kerr to hold the fort. Turner hanging on until seven overs were left. Kerr was missed, off Devon Malcolm, when 38.

Dean Jones enjoyed a lead of 281 when Derbyshire had resumed under the first clear skies of the match. He and Kim Barnett added 45 in seven overs,

taking 12 off Andrew Caddick's first, before Barnett drove hard and low and Caddick took a swooping return catch. Barnett's 141 was made off 196 balls. An hour's batting brought another 101 runs and the declaration.

As Somerset were starting their chase, Caddick was explaining the background to a rumour that he was leaving, with Surrey, Sussex and Glamorgan being mentioned. Somerset's chief executive, Peter Anderson, pointed out that Caddick was under contract for two more years "and we have no plans to release him". Caddick commented: "I am trying to renegotiate the best deal for myself."

Champions cower under Essex pressure

MICHAEL AUSTIN

reports from Edgbaston Essex 238 and 450-6 dec Warwickshire 253 and 265 Essex win by 170 runs

A home run beckons Essex, coincidentally just like their fellow title challengers Surrey and Derbyshire, following their early-afternoon triumph over Warwickshire, county champions for the past two years.

Essex meet Sussex and Glamorgan, both at Chelmsford, after a match which Paul Prichard, the captain, described

as one they simply had to win to keep a third championship title in six years within range.

The table is so tight that even dropping a bonus point seems heinous with potentially fatal consequences. Essex, however, pocketed their sixth win in seven games, with Neil Williams and Peter Such taking four wickets.

Warwickshire fell with a roar, not a whimper, using the cudgel to add 200 runs in two and a half hours for the loss of their last seven wickets. Essex knew that victory would be theirs from the time Graham Gooch and Prichard became self-appointed match-winners with third-day

centuries. Making 436 for victory was not a possibility for Warwickshire.

At times, Essex not so much appealed but implored the umpires to award leg-before decisions. Not because success was in doubt, but just to make an earlier getaway for today's important business at Lords.

Trevor Penney, with 70 from 119 balls, Neil Smith and Ashley Giles could have been identified as Lancashire sympathisers – such was their determination to inconvenience Essex. Giles made 49 at a run a ball, with five fours and three sixes, before being last out.

Smith's 46 occupied only 59 balls and their partnership of 62 in nine overs was reminiscent of the Essex second innings. Of the last-day wickets, only Penney was dismissed playing defensively. On 14, Giles did benefit from one of the game's dozen or so dropped catches when Paul Grayson fumbled at third slip off Ashley Cowan, a 21-year-old seamer whose match figures were a worthy 5 for 71.

Williams, the new ball partner and 13 years his senior, returned 7 for 127 overall, which alongside the batting of Gooch, Prichard and Ronnie Irani, was too potent for Warwickshire.

Surrey ready to sweep away dust

DAVID LLEWELLYN

reports from The Oval Surrey 395 and 298 Northants 235 and 233 Surrey win by 225 runs

Whisper it, but Surrey are definitely in with a shout in this year's Championship, and not before time. Too often in the past they have promised much and delivered nothing. They are not so much a team as a collective, thinking and playing as one. Players have come in and out of the side but everyone has had a part to play.

Captain Alec Stewart's absence at his wife Lynn's hospital bedside for half this match was irrelevant, he knew Adam Hollis could cope in his stead, the stand-in having led the side to four wins in his seven matches in charge this summer.

Stewart's joy at becoming a father again, this time to Emily Elizabeth (at 6lb 12oz about the weight of two jumbo bats), would have been heightened at the way in which the Surrey attack stuck to their task yesterday, overcoming some disconcerting resistance to pick off the remaining three wickets and render one batsman, David Ripley, hors de combat with a bruised left index finger.

Only David Capel, who was dismissed a tantalising two runs short of a deserved fifty and Jeremy Snape got any kind of a score, but it was never enough. To add injury to the insult of defeat, Ripley joins Paul Taylor (Achilles tendon injury) on the doubtful list for tomorrow's crucial Sunday League clash. These sides make up a trio with Nottinghamshire sharing second place on 42 points, although Surrey's superior run-rate gives them a considerable edge.

The dust in the trophy cupboard was last disturbed in 1982 when they lifted the NatWest Trophy but now the double is on at a success-starved Oval.

It is just a matter of whether Surrey can maintain the pressure and retain their confidence. Hollis' analysis of the Surrey resurgence is blunt: "When we are performing well the only people who can beat us are ourselves."

He admits that as a club they straddle the thin line between arrogance and self-confidence – downfall and success. "The boys are naturally quite an arrogant bunch," said Hollis, "25, candidly, and I am up there with the best of them." Arrogant or not, there is silver to be won and wipe away a clouded recent past, and this could be the side to do it.

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sport

Frustrated centre-forward makes his mark

Glenn Moore talks to Kevin Pressman, the goalkeeper who has helped Sheffield Wednesday become leaders of the pack

There was less than 10 minutes to go as the goalkeeper raced the opposing centre-forward to a long ball hit towards the corner. He reached it first, but was outside his area. With the forward breathing down his neck, he calmly flicked the ball over both their heads, turned first and chested it into the area before picking it up.

René Higuita? Jorge Campos? Jose Luis Chilavert? No. It was none of the extrovert South American goalkeepers. It was the unassuming Kevin Pressman of the unexpected Premiership leaders, Sheffield Wednesday, bamboozling Leicester's Steve Claridge on Monday night.

"If it had been a Continental player, we'd have been raving about the skill," Trevor Francis, Sky TV's commentator, said. Francis, Pressman's former manager at Wednesday, added: "He's always doing it in training - but 10 minutes before the end of a game, with the score at 2-1."

"I'm a frustrated centre-forward," admitted the 28-year-old at Wednesday's training ground this week. "People say: 'What if you made a mistake?' but I don't worry about it. It is exactly the same as if I had come for a cross and dropped it, the consequence is the same. If it comes off you're the best, if it doesn't you get slaughtered."

"I don't go out planning to do them. It's a split-second decision. I try and keep risks to a minimum. I'm not going to try and nutmeg someone or something ridiculous like that."

Unlike most frustrated centre-forwards, the amiable Pressman does have something of a pedigree, even taking a penalty in an FA Cup shoot-out. "I played there for England schools at Lilleshall in a practice match because they were short - and scored. For Derbyshire boys and Chesterfield boys I'd play the first half in goal, and if we were losing, I used to go up front. Taking the penalty [at Wolves two seasons ago] was no harder than being in goal and trying to save it," Pressman scored, but as Chris Waddle did not, Wednesday went out.

He draws the line at copying Chilavert and Higuita and taking free-kicks. "I don't think I have the legs to get back, you have to be careful. As we have seen this season, people can shoot from anywhere these days. I'm always thinking a player is about to shoot, wherever he is."

As we speak, Garth Crooks is talking to David Hirst in front of the BBC TV cameras, another TV crew



Kevin Pressman: I try to keep risks to a minimum. I'm not going to try to nutmeg someone or something ridiculous like that

Photograph: Simon Wilkinson

is interviewing David Pleat and a clutch of radio and press men wander about. Sheffield Wednesday are suddenly news and they are enjoying it so much they have not even posted a jobs worth on the gate to keep people out.

"It's great," Pressman said. "It makes a change, especially after the way we have started the last two years. It's been nice to come into training every morning with something to pull forward to. There is a buzz about the place."

"Everybody is talking about it in the city. They can't believe it. They're asking: 'When's it going to end?' but I'm not really surprised. In the last two years, we have very much under-achieved. We have got good players, they may not be world-famous names, but as a team we have always had the potential. It's just a matter of making it click, getting everybody to pull together and work hard. We are now working as a unit to get the ball back."

This is a Hillsborough theme, as

Pressman's potted pen-pictures of his team-mates (right) underline. "Honest, hard-working are his most common adjectives. Such virtues have not been common features of previous Pleat teams, but they are a necessity in the modern Premiership. Nowadays you have to earn the right to play," Pressman said. "You have

to break people's resistance before you can knock it around."

Unlike other clubs, Wednesday made most of their summer spending in the lower divisions, buying young and hungry players. Pleat also brought in Peter Shreeves as coach. "That has made a difference," Pressman said. "He is a very professional person in his approach. In training,

he makes sure you all warm up properly and look like a team. These are little things which are trivial to an outsider, but to a player doing them every day they make a difference. We know what we are doing."

Wednesday's new resilience was evident against Leicester. "We did not play as we feel we can, but we got the

result," Pressman added. "Look at Manchester United, they do not play their best every game, but they grind the result out and get the 1-0 win they need. It keeps them on course."

That win put Wednesday five points clear. Later midweek results means the lead is down to three points as they approach today's top of the table match with Chelsea, but

whatever happens, they will at worst be level top with Aston Villa tonight.

Villa are the club Wednesday hope to emulate. A year ago, Villa had also escaped relegation, more narrowly than Wednesday, but they began the season by beating Manchester United and maintained the momentum to finish fourth. They also won the Coca-Cola Cup. Now they are regarded as contenders.

"That could happen to us," said Pressman, who is in his 12th season at Hillsborough, but only his fourth as the recognised No 1. "We have the players here to stay in the top six. When everything is going well, everyone wants a part of it. When it's not, you get little niggles and you think: 'Ooh, I'm a bit stiff today', whereas when things are going well it does not matter, everyone wants to play, everyone wants the ball."

"That 'feelgood' factor means people are not frightened of making a mistake. When you are down at the bottom and you make a mistake, it could be three points lost and rele-

gation. At the top, if you make a mistake, you think you can rectify it."

Wednesday's success can only help Pressman's England ambitions. As a youngster, he was promising enough for his school to allow him to take his exams while on tour with England in Switzerland. He went on to earn Under-21 and B caps and was called into one of Terry Venables' early get-togethers.

Then came a hernia and a loss of form, a pattern which was repeated last season. "I don't like to use excuses, and at the time I didn't think I was affected by them, but both needed operations and I can see by the way I train and play now that I was."

"A hernia affects the sharp stuff, the reaction saves, it makes you that split-second late because you get to know what type of movement hurts you and you shy away from it. You are battling against your own mind."

"I've learned a lesson - don't carry injuries, get them sorted out. If you are not 100 per cent in the Premiership, you get punished."

SO JUST WHO ARE SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY? Kevin Pressman introduces his team-mates

Peter Atherton

Age 26, £200,000 from Coventry two years ago. Our captain, prefers centre-back but currently filling in at right-back. Honest, hard-working, reliable and consistent.

Ian Nolan

Age 25, £1.5m from Tranmere two years ago. Probably the fittest player in the club, gets up and down from left-back, two-footed, which not many players are. Another honest and hard-working player.

Des Walker

Age 30, £2.7m from Sunderland three years ago. English international. Right centre-back. Extremely gifted and very reliable. Looked like he was going to be the best of the last two years. Nobody is more committed. Lots of pace.

Dejan Stankovic

Age 21, £2m from Red Star Belgrade last season. Yugoslav international. Left centre-back. He is such a different player this season we almost checked his passport. The change is unbelievable, he's come on a ton.

Wayne Collins

Age 27, £200,000 from Crewe this summer. Our centre pin, he sits and holds and makes the midfield tick. He has good feet, he gets the ball off the back four and passes it.

Guy Whittingham

Age 31, £700,000 from Aston Villa two seasons ago. Has had a new lease of life. Came as a centre-forward, now in right-midfield. For me he has been the best player in the last two years. Someone you can count on.

Mark Poshob

Age 25, £300,000 from Derby a year ago. Welsh international. Fantastic left-foot with great free-kicks. Works hard with a good motor, does a lot of unglamorous work in midfield. Good tackler.

Scott Oakes

Age 24, £425,000 from Luton this summer. Crosses a superb ball, good-foot. Hoping to get his dad for the Christmas party - he's a member of Shrewsbury.

Regi Blomqvist

Age 27, £275,000 from Feyenoord last season. Dutch international. Our first player, a legend already. Good sense of humour, great player. Now he has got used to the competitive nature and the pace of the Premiership.

Nicholas Hainwright

Age 28, from Luton. What can you say? He's already scored two goals of the season. Very solid. The Villa goal and a fantastic pre-season gave him the confidence he needed.

Andy Booth

Age 22, £2.7m from Huddersfield this summer. He's done well and already surprised a few. Works hard, honest, prepared to go in where it hurts. Scored twice so far.

David Hirst

Age 28, £200,000 from Barnsley 10 years ago. English international. Been here almost as long as me. Fans' favourite, great potential, needs to play 20-30 injury-free games. Can score from anywhere.

Escaping from the Lone Ranger

Thirty-five years ago, my father took me to my first football match. I was seven years old. I stood with his friends on a dark, damp Saturday afternoon. The smells from that occasion are timeless: the peculiarly attractive aroma of tobacco which was only to be found on the old terraces; the damp autumn dusk of cinders and midweek. I remember nothing of the game except that it was a first round FA Cup tie and we lost 1-0 at home. Every other Saturday from then on I would sit in the back room of my nan's terraced house with a bottle of Tizer on a drop-leaf table watching the Lone Ranger and waiting for my dad to walk in from the match. He would always stand silently in the shadows by the door, in the far corner from the television, with his coat and flat cap on, waiting to recover his strength, before announcing that they had lost again.

On Saturday afternoons I would take a broom and clean my nan's back yard, dreaming of becoming a road sweeper, and every once in a while I would hear a roar from the ground. I would stop and wonder if it meant that they might win a game.

I don't know which Saturday it was, but it must have been near the last of the season, when dad came in during the Lone Ranger and stood, as usual, in the flickering shadows. Nobody said anything for a long time, eventually he declared that they were relegated.

Sometime during the ensuing years "his" team became "my" team, "they" became "we". The pattern for a lifetime of support soon became apparent. Every game, every season followed the same cycle. Any period of success and elation was inevitably followed by failure and heartache. An away victory in the Cup against First Division

FAN'S EYE VIEW

No 152: Scunthorpe Utd
Robert Butroyd

opposition would draw double the normal home crowd in the next game, when we would lose in the most inept manner. The fleeting moments of success allowed us a glimpse of the euphoria which the more successful teams enjoyed as if by right. January 34 1970 at Hillsborough was one such occasion, when 39,000 people saw Geoff Barker score the winning goal with a diving header. He knew little of it and only found out the result from the hospital bed. There have been other exhilarating games, against Leeds in the 1980s and Chelsea in the 1990s.

However, the strongest memories are those of ignominious defeats at home. The 2-4 defeat by Barrow and 2-5 defeat by Walsall have the greatest claims to being the moments of deepest despair, times when the ground stood cold and empty, the wind cut through to the heart and the crowd countenanced abandoning the cause once and for all. You earn the right to be a fan at this level. No easy passages here.

When my father was too ill, and the years of dreaming had become too much for him, I started taking the next generation. I sometimes think that it is wrong of me to get my son involved in this particular lost cause. I imagine he knows that we are never going to quite make it, and that they will always flatter enough to offer up the dream, only to see it falter and fade into the summer dust at play-off time. But he seems to be falling for it too. He already worries about who he'll take when I'm not there to go any more...

MAJOR WEEKEND FOOTBALL FIXTURES AND POOLS CHECK

TODAY			
3.0 unless stated			
FA Cup First Round			
1 Aston Villa v Arsenal	16 Southampton v Bolton	34 Cardiff v Exeter	Second Division
2 Leeds v Manchester United	17 Stoke v Crystal Palace	35 Cardiff v Swansea	- Barnet v Queens of the South
3 Liverpool v Southampton	18 Tranmere v Birmingham	36 Chester v Lincoln	- Clyde v Dunfermline
4 Middlesbrough v Coventry	Second Division	37 Doncaster v Mansfield	- Livingston v Brechin
5 Nottingham Forest v Leicester	19 Blackpool v Wales	38 Fulham v Colchester	- St Johnstone v Ayr
6 Sheffield Wednesday v Chelsea	20 Bournemouth v Crewe	39 Hereford v Hartlepool	- Stranraer v Hamilton
7 Tottenham v Newcastle	21 Bristol City v Preston	40 Hull City v Rochdale	
8 Wimbledon v Everton	22 Bury v Rotherham	41 Leyton Orient v Darlington	
Nationwide Football League	23 Chesterfield v Brentford	42 Wigan v Southport	
First Division	24 Gillingham v Barnley	Scottish League	
9 Bradford City v Norwich	25 Millwall v Bristol Rovers	Premier Division	
10 Grimsby v Swindon	26 Plymouth v Notts County	40 Celtic v Hibernian	
11 Ipswich v Nuffield	27 Watford v Stockport	41 Hearts v Dundee Utd	
12 Manchester City v Barnsley	28 Wrexham v Peterborough	42 Kilmarnock v Dundee	
13 Oldham v Sheffield Utd	29 Wycombe v Luton	43 Motherwell v Rangers	
14 Portsmouth v Port Vale	30 York v Shrewsbury	44 Raith Rovers v Aberdeen	
15 QPR v West Bromwich	Third Division	First Division	
	31 Barnet v Northampton	45 Clydebank v St Mirren	
	32 Charlton v Scarbrough	46 Dundee v Aldrie	
	33 Cambridge Utd v Torquay	47 Morton v East Fife	
		48 St Johnstone v Perth	
		49 Stirling v Falkirk	

TEAM SHEET

Aston Villa v Arsenal		Liverpool v Southampton		Nottingham Forest v Leicester		Tottenham v Newcastle	
Last season: 1-1		Last season: 1-1		Last season: No corresponding fixture		Last season: 1-1	
Last five League matches: Aston Villa LWWDW; Arsenal WWDWL		Last five League matches: Liverpool DWWWD; Southampton DDLDD		Last five League matches: Nottingham Forest WWDLD; Leicester WDWLL		Last five League matches: Tottenham DWDLD; Newcastle DWWWD	
Australian goalkeeper Bosnich remains doubtful and deputy Oakes is poised to continue.		Bosnich is back in the Southampton goal but defender Morison is still unfit.		Forest will be without in-form striker Campbell, which could provide a rare chance for Lee.		Nielsen is confident of shaking off a dead-leg injury in time to make his White Hart Lane debut. Spurs manager Francis is still without strikers Sherrington and Armstrong and defenders Mabbutt and Austin.	
Arsenal are again likely to be without England goalkeeper Seaman, who is having treatment on a hamstring injury. Bosnich is very doubtful after collecting an injury in midweek.		Czech Republic's talent Berger could be given his Liverpool debut and Redknapp is also on the verge of a recall after recovering from a knee injury. McManaman and Fowler are fit after back injuries.		Leicester manager O'Neill has a full-strength squad. Marshall looks set to stay on the bench, with Parker and Izzet vying for a midfield place.		Manager Keegan has no injury worries and is expected to name an unchanged Newcastle United side.	
Leeds v Man Utd		Middlesbrough v Coventry		Sheff Wed v Chelsea		Wimbledon v Everton	
Last season: 3-1		Last season: 2-1		Last season: 0-0		Last season: 2-3	
Last five League matches: Leeds DDLWW; Man Utd WWDWD		Last five League matches: Middlesbrough DDLWD; Coventry DDLDD		Last five League matches: Sheff Wed DWWWD; Chelsea LWWD		Last five League matches: Wimbledon DDLWW; Everton WWDWL	
Cole could be drafted into United's squad for the first time this season, but Heane and Phil Neville are still out.		Centre-half Dean is suspended for Coventry following his dismissal at Chelsea two weeks ago, with Borrows' favourite to step in.		Labour could be missing for Chelsea, but they have Lee as a ready-made replacement in the sweeper's role.		Everton manager Royle will wait for fitness checks on Stuart and Barrett before naming his side.	
Leeds will be missing Deane and Yeboah, whose injury problems may keep him out until Christmas.		Middlesbrough will be unchanged from the side which beat West Ham 4-1 on Wednesday.		Last season: No corresponding fixture		Last five League matches: Sunderland LWDL; West Ham DDLWL	
Defenders Melville and Scott missed training yesterday, but are expected to be fit, with manager Reid likely to name an unchanged Sunderland side.		West Ham manager Redknapp must decide whether to start with Dummetts or Lazaridis on the left, while Reuben, if fit, is likely to replace Potts in defence.					

Wilkins pulls on his boots for Wycombe

Ray Wilkins yesterday took steps to fill the unexpected void in his working day by signing for Wycombe Wanderers.

While Queen's Park Rangers take on West Bromwich Albion in the First Division today, their former player-manager will turn out a division lower at Adams Park against Luton.

Wilkins, who has signed for Wycombe on a game-by-game basis, denied that he had resigned at QPR, as indicated by Chris Wright, the club's new owner.

"It was not a resignation. I've never walked away from anything or any challenge in my life," Wilkins said. "It's been a traumatic week for me, nothing short of horrendous. It will certainly be a challenge to go and play after this."

Wilkins, 40 next week, moved from QPR to Crystal Palace as player-coach on a free transfer in 1994 when Alan Smith, the

Wycombe manager, was in charge. He played only 20 minutes before being injured and never played for Palace again.

David Butty and John Beresford will miss Newcastle United's Uefa Cup home tie with Halmstad on Tuesday because of suspensions carried over from previous European competitions.

Leeds United could face a Fifa investigation about the role of the agent Rune Hauge in the £300,000 signing of the Norwegian Gunnar Halle.

The transfer of Halle, whom Hauge took to Oldham Athletic four years ago, has been handled by his associate, Frank Mathiesen. Hauge was suspended by Fifa for his part in the George Graham "bungs" affair. The suspension was extended for life when Fifa discovered he had continued to work as an agent through Mathiesen on Lars Bohinen's move to Blackburn Rovers.

No let-up for Celtic

Scottish football

The Celtic manager, Tommy Burns, dismissed any notion that his team will neglect today's League match against Hibernian as Tuesday's Uefa Cup match with Hamburg looms. He insists that history will be enough to stimulate Celtic, as Rangers are pursuing the club's cherished nine-in-a-row championship record.

"The fans will no doubt be quick to remind the players of their responsibilities," Burns said. Still without Paul McStay and Phil O'Donnell, he has Josh McKinlay also doubtful because of a leg injury.

Tommy McLean will end a 15-month exile from management when he steps from an Edinburgh courtroom into the trials of the Premier Division at

Stark's Park. He was installed as the new manager of bottom club Raith Rovers on Tuesday, but he has spent the week in court wrangling with his former club, Hearts.

"I will give everybody a chance to show me what they can do," McLean said. "After Rangers and Celtic, Aberdeen are a major force in Scotland, so it will be a tough start for me."

Rangers, at Motherwell, await a verdict on Richard Gough, who has stitches in a midweek head wound. Alex Totten, the Kilmarnock manager, gives Kevin McGowne his debut against Dunfermline at Rugby Park. The visitors, still without the suspended Marc Miller, will have the former Sporting Lisbon goalkeeper, Zoran Leticic, on the bench as back-up for Ian Westwater.

هذا من الأناحل

